



Linguine with Mussels and Fennel

SERVES Serves 4

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

To start our linguine with mussels recipe, we made a flavorful cooking broth of onions, fennel, tomatoes, and wine. We added canned diced tomatoes, which had a far better flavor than all but the best fresh tomatoes. We knew that mussels cook quickly, so we simply added the mussels to the skillet along with these ingredients, covered them, and within about six minutes, all of the mussels were open and ready to eat. The addition of some fresh tarragon to our linguine with mussels recipe backed up the slightly muted flavor of the fennel.



INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ medium onion, chopped fine
- 1 medium bulb fennel, chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup white wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes in juice
- ½ teaspoon hot red pepper flakes
- 2 pounds mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- Salt
- 1 pound linguine
- 2 tablespoons fresh tarragon leaves, chopped

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

• Look closely at the package before you buy mussels. We found that farmed mussels grown on ropes suspended in the water are the best bet for this recipe. They have little or no grit compared with wild mussels and mussels cultivated along the ground, so you don't have to worry about straining the sauce. When cleaning the mussels, throw out any that won't close or have broken shells. Start cooking the pasta right before the mussels go into the sauce.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Bring 4 quarts water to a rolling boil in a large pot for cooking the pasta.
- 2 Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering but not smoking. Add the onion and fennel and cook until slightly softened, 5 minutes. Add the wine and tomatoes, including their juice, and the red pepper flakes. Simmer until the sauce reduces slightly, about 10 minutes. Add the mussels, cover, and steam until they are fully open, 6 to 7 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the mussels to a bowl and cover to keep them warm.
- 3 Just before the mussels go into the sauce, add 1 tablespoon salt and the pasta to the boiling water. Stir to separate the pasta and cook until al dente. Reserving 1/4 cup cooking water, drain the pasta and transfer it to the pot with the sauce. Toss with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and tarragon, moistening the pasta as needed with the reserved cooking water. Adjust the seasonings with salt to taste. Divide the pasta among individual bowls and top with the mussels. Serve immediately.

