

SEAFOOD *with*
Shannon Bennett
 Mud crab sandwich

Begin this recipe a day ahead to marinate the crab.

Prep time 45 mins, cook 30 mins (plus chilling) Serves 4

30 gm butter
 ½ lemon
 Micro-basil to serve

Court bouillon and mud crab

½ small fennel bulb, chopped
 1 golden shallot, chopped
 5 black peppercorns
 500 ml (2 cups) white wine
 2 lemons, sliced
 1 mud crab (1.5kg), chilled, brain spiked, brought back to room temperature, tail flap removed

Gascony butter

1 head garlic
 150 gm soft butter
 1 tsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
 1 tsp finely chopped shallot
 Finely grated rind of 1 lemon
 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 ½ tsp cayenne pepper

Bread crisps

½ dense loaf of bread
 30 gm butter, softened

1 For court bouillon and mud crab, place fennel, shallot and peppercorns in a saucepan with 3 litres water and bring to the boil over high heat. Once boiling, pour in the wine and bring back to the boil. Add the sliced lemon rounds and crab, bring back to the boil, then remove from heat. Set aside to cool completely, then refrigerate overnight.

2 The next day, remove the crab from the bouillon and carefully break apart, saving the liquid from the head. Carefully

pick all the meat from the crab, ensuring the meat is free of shell and remains in large flakes. Store the meat covered in the fridge.

3 For the Gascony butter, preheat oven to 160C and slice the garlic in half crossways. Place cut-side down in a small, ovenproof pan with 50gm butter and roast until golden and tender (25-30 minutes). Remove from the oven, then, when cool enough to handle, pop the garlic from the skin and mash with a fork. Mix together with the remaining ingredients in a bowl and season with salt and pepper.

4 For the bread crisps, slice the loaf into 1mm-thick slices on a meat slicer, or slice very thinly with a very sharp knife. Using a 6cm round cutter, cut the bread into rounds. You'll need 16, but make extra in case of breakages. Place a sheet of baking paper on a heavy, flat tray, brush the paper with butter and place the bread rounds on top. Brush another sheet of paper with butter, place butter-side down on the bread and top with another heavy tray. Bake in the oven until bread rounds are golden and crisp (10-20 minutes).

5 To assemble, gently melt butter in a pan over low heat. Add 1 tbsp of the reserved crab juices and gently stir until emulsified. Add 1 tsp of Gascony butter, then remove from the heat and fold into the crab. Season with salt and a squeeze of lemon. Sandwich crab between toast rounds, garnish with micro-basil and serve.

MY NOTES