



Pan Seared Sea Bass with Caramelized Fennel, Saffron Broth and Parmesan Croutons

3 Tablespoons olive oil
2 large fennel bulbs cut in 6 wedges, reserve some fronds for garnish
pinch of sugar, salt and freshly ground pepper
6- 6 ounce fresh sea bass fillets
salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup flour
3 garlic cloves chopped
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 Tablespoon tarragon wine vinegar
1 cup fish stock or chicken stock
3 Tablespoons butter
pinch of saffron threads

2 tablespoons olive oil
12 French bread slices
2 minced garlic cloves
finely grated zest of one lemon
1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 425. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a sauté pan. When the oil is very hot add the fennel let brown without stirring. When fennel caramelizes on one side, sprinkle with a scant amount of sugar, salt and freshly ground pepper and roast in the oven .30-40 min. or until fennel is tender. 10 min before fennel is done. Dredge fish with flour, salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a sauté pan. Sear fish 2-3 min. turn fish over and finish in the oven for about another 5-6 min. While fish is roasting. Remove fennel from its pan, keep warm. Set the pan on the heat, add a bit of olive oil and garlic, sauté 1 minute, add fennel fronds, and wine, and deglaze the pan. Add vinegar, stock and butter and saffron. Bring to a boil season with salt and pepper, Turn off heat.

For croutons.

While fish is roasting, drizzle a baking sheet with olive oil. Set the slices of bread in a single layer in the oil, then flip them over. Combine the garlic, lemon zest, parsley and cheese in a small bowl. Sprinkle over bread slices. Remove fish from the oven and turn down to 350. Bake croutons for about 10 minutes until the bread is golden brown and cheese is melted.

Place fish in shallow bowl top with fennel and a bit of broth serve with crouton.