

FOOD IS CULTURE

The Food is Culture project aims at making European citizens aware that food heritage is a way to express their belonging to Europe and to better understand the richness and uniqueness of its cultural diversity.

Añana Salt (Spain)

Pedro Subijana's Salt-Baked Anchovies

For 4 people

1 kilogram of Añana Salt

6-8 fresh anchovy fillets

50 grams of tomato pulp (either fresh tomato mashed with a fork, or canned tomato)

1 Ibarra pepper, finely chopped

4 garlic shoots

4 chive flowers

extra virgin olive oil

anchovy oil (mix a couple of cured anchovy fillets with about 20 grams of extra virgin olive oil)

1 chuzo (chuzos are highly prized stalactites of salt that form naturally as brine drips from the salt pools and channels of Añana).

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Heat the salt in a frying pan, getting it as hot as possible without letting it burn. Line a tamis or large bowl with a clean, damp cloth (if using a bowl, the cloth should be large enough that the corners hang over the rim).

Meanwhile, rinse the fresh anchovy fillets (if you are starting with whole anchovies, gut them and remove the head, spine, and tail). Spread the tomato pulp in a thin layer on the center of a large, flat plate. Position the anchovy fillets, skin side up, on the tomato pulp. Garnish the fillets with the chopped Ibarra pepper, garlic shoots, chive flowers, and a little extra virgin olive oil.

Now use the hot salt to slightly cook the anchovies: With a large spoon or spatula, transfer the hot salt from the frying pan into the cloth-lined bowl or tamis. If you are using a bowl, tie the corners of the cloth together to create a sack. Place the sack or tamis of hot salt on top of the anchovy fillets and leave it for 3-4 minutes. The heat from the salt will gently cook the fillets, and the damp cloth will help keep the fillets moist and prevent the salt from imparting a strong flavor to the fish.

After 3-4 minutes, remove the sack or tamis of salt. The anchovy fillets should have turned whitish.

Spoon a bit of anchovy oil over the fillets and then grate some of the chuzo over the plate with a microplane.

Serve as an appetizer.



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