

Whole roast turbot, peas, fennel, sugar snaps and new potatoes

The king of the sea, turbot is a highly prized fish by chefs for its firm flesh and meaty taste. A large flat fish found off the south coast, the Baltic, North Sea and the Mediterranean, it represents excellent value when bought whole on the bone. When cooked on the bone, it's more forgiving and harder to overcook. It's also easier to handle when getting it out of the pan.

Ingredients

1.3 – 1.5kg turbot cleaned and trimmed
2 medium shallots whole skin on
1 large head of fennel cut into wedges about 6-8 pieces slightly bigger than your thumb
100g sugar snaps
200g frozen peas (defrosted)
200g new potatoes
3 cloves of garlic husks on but slightly crushed
Sprig of lemon thyme
3 bay leaves
1 lemon
200ml white wine
½ pint Sandys fish stock
30ml olive oil
30g cold cubed butter

Chef's tip:

Using a thick bottomed roasting tray always works better than one that is thin and flimsy as the thick bottom will hold the heat better and enables even cooking. Lining the bottom of the roasting tray with greaseproof paper is a good way to stop the fish from sticking to the bottom of the pan as the last thing you want is a beautiful whole fish breaking up before you serve it. In this recipe we are going to blanch (cook in water and chill under running water) the shallots, potatoes and fennel. This evens out the cooking time and enables you to have everything ready at the same time.

Recipe:

- Preheat oven to 220°C
- Place the potatoes into cold water with a pinch of salt bring to the boil and cook until tender. Cool under cold running water
- In the same water cook the fennel until tender, but with a little bite. This should take about 5mins. The fennel will also need to be cooled under running water.
- Lastly, using the same water, blanch the shallots with the skin on. When the water returns to the boil, turn down to simmer and cook for about 8mins. Again these will need a refresh under running water.
- Once they are cooled halve the potatoes, gently cut the shallots in half and discard the skin leave to one side
- Line the roasting tray with good quality silicon baking paper, drizzle with salt and pepper lay your fish on the tray
- Arrange the potatoes, shallots, fennel, bay leaves, thyme, garlic and lemon

wedges around the fish drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper

- Place in the oven and cook the fish and veg for about 25 mins. You can check the fish by pushing a thin bladed knife or skewer into the shoulder of the fish. If it goes through with no resistance or springiness, your fish is done.
- Once cooked lift your fish out leaving the vegetables in the tray. Put the roasting tray on the stove top on a medium heat, add your white wine bring to the boil then add your Sandys fish stock. Bring to the boil again add the sugar snaps and peas, keeping the sauce bubbling, add your cubed butter and stirring in gently until dissolved. You should be left with a vibrant citrusy butter emulsion.
- To divide your turbot into portions run a knife lightly along the spine and slide each fillet onto large flat spatula. To access the smaller fillets on the underside, peel the fishbone off with your fingers. It should come off in one large piece.
- You can serve this in various ways, individually plated or in the tray for the family to dig into.