

Stewed parrotfish

The *vieja*, in its different varieties and colours, is one of the favourite fish for the Canary islanders. Its flesh is delicate and has a special flavour, which is why it is preferable to use simple preparations that do not mask its taste. Generally it is accompanied by *papas arrugadas* (jacket potatoes boiled in salt water) or potatoes cooked without their skin, extra virgin olive oil, local wine vinegar and hot paprika (chilli type, do not confuse with peppercorns) or with a “*mojo verde*”.

It is usually eaten very fresh, although in some islands it is eaten with “*jareas*”, pieces dried in the sun and air (“*aireadas: jareadas*”), after a light salting process. There is no unanimity as to the ideal size of the “*ración*” or ration of *vieja* which comes whole including the head, weighing between 500 to 750 grams (medium to large).

In this recipe we have opted for a weight, weighed whole including the head, of between 500 and 750 grams (medium to large).

Preparation

Place the fish and all the other ingredients in a pot with abundant water (optionally, in some places a few spoonfuls of extra virgin olive oil is added to the water). Put on the heat and leave to cook. The cooking time is very important, but is difficult to set a time, as this depends on the size of the fish. The flesh should not be raw or, worse still, overdone, as it quickly loses its gastronomic quality. The experts offer the following hint: observe the small fin on the underbelly which, when raw, remains stuck to the body. You have to pay close attention, as when the fin rises and opens, the fish is at his best.

Note...

This is eaten frequently in Tenerife accompanied by a young white wine. In some parts of the island, a small spoonful of red wine is added to the water on the serving platter, replacing the vinegar in part if this is “*macho*” or very pungent.



Ingredients:

One medium vieja.

*One large onion
peeled and cut in half.*

*One green pepper
chopped into various
large pieces.*

*One tomato cut in
four pieces.*

*3 cloves of garlic
peeled and whole.*

*One small bunch of
parsley.*

Salt.

Water.