



Pan-European Bollito Misto

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

A selection of your favourite meats and sausages - I chose beef brisket (for corning), Bavarian Weisswurst, Bockwurst and Chicken Tenderloin (for reasons explained below).

Cipolline en Agrodolce di Vino Rosso - Pearl Onions, Balsamic Vinegar, Red Wine, Sugar, Salt, Pepper.

Salsa Verde - Italian Parsley, Capers, Dijon Mustard, Anchovies, White Wine Vinegar, Olive Oil, Salt, Pepper.

Red and Yellow Pepper Salsa - Red Pepper, Yellow Pepper, Apple Vinegar, Olive Oil, Salt, Pepper.

Instructions

This started out as I just corning a brisket in preparation for a traditional Irish Boiled Dinner, but then over the course of the week that it took to cure, I started having some ideas. This is the end result.

Boiled meats generally gets a pretty bad rap in comparison to the robust flavours of grilling, frying and roasting, but those that complain about boiled meats have never seen encountered the king of all meat dishes, the Bollito Misto.

Bollito Misto is a traditional Italian feast of boiled meats served with a selection of sauces and sides - and when I say a feast I mean A FEAST. Whole chickens, tongue, calves' heads, veal, cotechino sausage etc. but unless your butcher is a miracle worker, you're probably going to find most of that hard to find. This dish is a far less extravagant version that can be scaled for 1 or 10. It also allows you to take a selection of your

favourite meats and build your own spread.

I wanted a lighter meat selection that wouldn't make me feel that I just killed an entire eco-system just to make lunch, and so I chose an Irish Corned Beef, English Poached Chicken (I chose tenderloin), Bavarian Weisswurst and German Bockwurst. I would have preferred to find cotechino, but I live in Japan and so pending a snap freeze in hell, I'll work with what I've got.

First to the corned beef. This is the only thing that requires preparation really. About a week in advance, in a large saucepan on low heat, make a brine from a cup of coarse salt, a cup of sugar, about 1.5 litres of water, a tablespoon of fennel seeds, 6 bay leaves, a teaspoon of cloves and a teaspoon of peppercorns. Heat until the salt and sugar are dissolved and, after the brine cools, placed a beef brisket of appropriate size (for my purposes, 1kg) in a large ziplock bag and pour over the brine. Squeeze out the remaining air and seal the bag. I don't use saltpeter for the beef because I don't think it's necessary. Saltpeter is a chemical preservative that helps prevent spoilage and keeps the meat pink. I don't think it's necessary and frankly, the less preservatives the better, right?

Cure the beef in the fridge for a week, flipping it around every couple of days. After a week, take out the brisket and rinse it well in cold water, picking out any peppercorns, fennel seeds or cloves that have gotten stuck in the fat. Place the brisket in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a simmer and simmer for about 4 hours, skimming off any rendered fat or other residues.

While the beef is cooking, you can make the sauces. The traditional sauces for Bollito Misto are things like Pearà (bread and pepper sauce), Cren (ground horseradish) Mustard Fruits and Salsa Verde, but I opted for something a little different. The freshness and acidity of each of these unique accompaniments really lightened and complemented the boiled meats.

Cipolline en Agrodolce di Vino Rosso - Cipolline are actually small hyacinth bulbs but the almost universally accepted substitute are small pearl onions. In a saucepan, mix together about a cup of red wine and half a cup of balsamic vinegar. Add in 1.5 tablespoons of sugar, a teaspoon of salt and some pepper. Peel the onions and add to the mixture. Boil for about half an hour until the sauce is reduced and the onions are tender, but still holding together.

Red and Yellow Pepper Salsa - This couldn't be more simple. Finely mince some raw red and yellow peppers (keeping each separate for presentation). Squeeze out any liquid in a muslin cloth and dress with apple vinegar, fruity olive oil, salt and freshly ground pepper.

Salsa Verde: This is simple and traditional. Italian parsley, capers, anchovies, pepper, mustard, white wine vinegar. Pulse them all together in a food processor and then add olive oil a little at a time to emulsify.

After the corned beef was cooked I removed it to rest for 15 minutes and then used the stock to boil the 2 kinds of sausage (7 minutes) and the chicken tenderloin (3 minutes plus resting).

When all the meat is rested, you can serve it whole with the sauces (as would be more traditional), or you can carve them and plate it up as I did.

(Considering that cabbage is almost the universal European accompaniment to meat, I served this with Butter Baked Cabbage - see my other recipe - but any of your favourite side dishes would work just as well.)