Prawn and beer orzotto

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

6 prawns, shelled
a good ziploc bagful of prawn shells
330ml beer (the pale kind)

good knob of butter
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 broccoli stems, finely chopped
a handful of barley

Serves 1, double barley and stock for 2

Instructions

I had some beer lying around. Had to cook with it because I didn't like the taste. Other stuff that needed to be used up were the barley and the broccoli stems. Substitute the broc with onion or celery or just omit altogether.

I normally freeze my prawn shells and once I gather them into a good enough portion I make something good like this. I make finely chopped shallots in big batches. They come in large quantities (to me) at the supermarket so I peel and process them at one go and do the crying just once. The good stuff goes into a ziploc bag in the freezer and I hack and go when I need it.

The results were really amazing. This tastes incredibly rich and has great depth of flavour because the stock concentrates so much in the orzotto.

1. Make your prawn stock by putting the beer and prawn shells in a pot, top up with about the same amount of water and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 5 mins, which is about the time you need to prepare the other ingredients anyway.

2. Melt the butter in a saucepan, then sweat the shallots gently for about a minute. Don't let them colour. Add broccoli stems and stir for about a minute too. Then the barley. Stir till glistening and combined.

3. This is the tedious part. Add a ladleful of stock into the saucepan and stir till it's pretty much absorbed. Keep repeating the steps till the barley plumps (about 30 mins) and taste. Keep going till the barley is the right texture, slightly firm not mushy. Read the papers while at it if you're bored. It takes a little longer than risotto, about 40 mins.

4. When it's just right, add the prawns and stir for another minute till cooked. Season and devour.