

# SAUTÉED MUSSELS *and* FENNEL SAUSAGE *in* TOMATO BROTH

## INGREDIENTS

### **Tomatillo Salsa**

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 small onions, finely chopped
- ½ lb. fennel sausage, removed from casing & crumbled
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ⅓ cup white wine
- 4 cups canned tomatoes, preferably Muir Glen brand
- 2½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 10 basil leaves, chopped
- 2 tsp. oregano, chopped

### **Croutons**

- 1 loaf country bread, cut into ½-inch thick slices
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled, cut in half lengthwise

### **Mussels**

- 2 lbs. mussels, cleaned
- ½ cup dry white wine
- baby basil leaves for garnish

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## PREPARATION

**Make croutons:** Place bread slices on a sheet pan and brush one side with olive oil. Toast bread, oiled side up, for 10-15 minutes, until golden and lightly crisp but not too hard. Remove from oven and very lightly rub garlic clove against each piece of toast. Set aside.

**Marinara sauce:** Heat butter in sauté pan over medium heat. Add onions and sausage and sauté until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add white wine and let reduce to a syrup, about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook to heat through, about 3 minutes. Add tomato paste, salt and sugar. Mix well. Just before serving, add the chopped basil and oregano. Keep warm.

**Sauté mussels:** Pour white wine in a sauté pan and add mussels. Turn heat to high, bring to a boil and cover pan. Cook until mussels have opened, stirring frequently to ensure they are evenly cooked, about 3 minutes. Pour cooking liquid through a fine strainer into tomato sauce. Discard any mussels that have not opened. Add tomato sauce to mussel sauté pan. Stir gently to combine. Re-heat if not already warm.

**Serve:** Place 2 croutons in a bowl. Spoon some mussels on top and garnish with basil leaves. Serve immediately.

Serves 8-10 as a first course.

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