

Cioppino Recipe (Seafood Stew)

By Sara May • Updated: Dec 14, 2022 • Rating: 4.95/5 (40 votes)

Overview

Cioppino (pronounced *chuh-peh-no*) is a San Francisco-born fisherman's stew of clams, mussels, white fish, and shrimp in a tomato-fennel, wine-kissed broth. This version feeds a crowd and includes an optional parsley-olive gremolata for a bright finish. Serve with grilled sourdough for dunking.

At a Glance

Cuisine	American / Mediterranean
Course	Entree or Side Dish; Seafood; Soup
Yield	Serves 10
Prep Time	50 minutes
Cook Time	40 minutes
Total Time	1 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients

Parsley-Olive Gremolata (Optional)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch parsley (about 2 oz), roughly chopped
- Zest of 1 orange
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mixed olives, pitted
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Cioppino

- 1 lb clams, scrubbed well
- 1 lb mussels, debearded and scrubbed well
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 1 large fennel bulb, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice (about 2 cups)
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1 (12 oz) jar roasted red peppers, drained and roughly chopped
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups dry white wine
- 1 (28 oz) can whole tomatoes, crushed by hand with juices
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups seafood stock¹
- 1 lb skinless firm white fish (halibut or cod), cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Grilled sourdough bread, for serving (optional)

Equipment

Large stockpot with steamer basket; large Dutch oven or 8-quart stockpot; wooden spoon; ladle.

Instructions

Make the Parsley–Olive Gremolata

1. **Process.** In a food processor, pulse parsley, orange zest, olives, garlic, salt, and red pepper flakes until a chunky paste forms. Scrape down the bowl, add olive oil, and pulse to a uniformly chunky consistency.
2. **Rest.** Let stand at room temperature while you prepare the cioppino so the flavors bloom.

Make the Cioppino

1. **Steam shellfish.** Bring about 2 cups water to a boil in a stockpot fitted with a steamer basket. Add mussels and clams; cover and steam 5–8 minutes until just opened. Transfer to a bowl (discard any that do not open). *Reserve the steaming liquid* (you will use about 1 cup now; save extra to adjust consistency if needed).
2. **Sauté aromatics.** In a Dutch oven over medium heat, warm the olive oil until shimmering. Add onion, fennel, and a generous pinch of salt; sauté 8–10 minutes until translucent. Add garlic, roasted red peppers, oregano, and thyme; cook 3–4 minutes until very fragrant and most moisture has evaporated.
3. **Deglaze.** Add white wine; scrape up any browned bits. Bring to a simmer and cook 5 minutes.
4. **Build the base.** Add hand-crushed tomatoes (with juices), seafood stock, and about 1 cup reserved steaming liquid. Stir, bring to a boil, then reduce to a lively simmer. Cook uncovered 20 minutes. Taste and season with salt as needed.
5. **Cook fish and shrimp.** Add the white fish and shrimp. Return to a simmer, cover, and cook 2–3 minutes, until fish is opaque and shrimp are pink and curled.
6. **Finish.** Remove from heat; gently stir in the cooked mussels and clams. Taste and adjust salt. If desired, thin with a splash more reserved steaming liquid.
7. **Serve.** Ladle into warm bowls. Top each serving with a spoonful of parsley–olive gremolata. Serve with grilled sourdough.

¹If needed, substitute bottled clam juice or low-sodium chicken stock.

How-To Guides

Peel & Devein Shrimp

- Have a bowl of cold water ready. With kitchen shears, cut along the back to the tail; peel off shell, legs, and tail.
- Use the tip of a paring knife to lift out the vein; swish shrimp in cold water. Repeat. Save shells for stock.

Debeard Mussels

- Scrub shells clean. If a fibrous “beard” is present, grasp it firmly and pull toward the hinge to remove (use a paper towel for grip if needed).

Wine Notes & Variations

- **Wine choice:** Use a dry, unoaked white (pinot grigio, sauvignon blanc, or chardonnay). Avoid “cooking wine.” For a heartier profile, red wine may be used.
- **No alcohol:** Substitute low-sodium chicken stock for the wine.
- **Seafood swaps:** Add or substitute scallops, cockles, crab, or lobster. Avoid very oily fish (e.g., salmon, trout, tuna) in this style of stew.

Serving & Keeping

- **Serve with:** Grilled or toasted sourdough; set small forks for shellfish and a bowl for shells.
- **Leftovers:** Refrigerate up to 3 days. Reheat gently; do not boil.

Nutrition (Approximate, per serving; 10 servings)

Calories	243.4 kcal
Carbohydrates	11 g
Protein	20.3 g
Fat	11.1 g
Saturated Fat	1.6 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	1.5 g
Monounsaturated Fat	7.1 g
Trans Fat	0.01 g
Cholesterol	85.2 mg
Sodium	1268.4 mg
Potassium	721.7 mg
Fiber	2.8 g
Sugar	3.7 g
Vitamin A	1008.1 IU
Vitamin C	37.1 mg
Calcium	128.4 mg
Iron	3.5 mg

Tip: Reserve extra shellfish steaming liquid to fine-tune broth consistency just before serving.