

Cioppino Seafood Stew

by Heidi Larsen • Updated: Jul 14, 2025

Overview

A tomato-based fisherman's stew loaded with fresh seafood in a savory wine broth. Inspired by Ina Garten's *Cook Like a Pro*, this cioppino is weeknight-easy yet special-occasion worthy. Serve with crusty sourdough for dunking.

At a Glance

Cuisine	Italian–American (San Francisco origin)
Yield	Serves 6
Prep Time	30 minutes
Cook Time	40 minutes
Total Time	1 hour 10 minutes
Serve With	Sourdough, garlic bread, or a simple green salad

Ingredients

Broth Base

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 2 cups fennel bulb (white only), cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups yellow onion (about 1 large), $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 1 teaspoon whole fennel seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 4 cups seafood stock¹
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups dry white wine (e.g., Pinot Grigio)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper (about 1 tablespoon salt & 1 teaspoon pepper for the pot)

Seafood

- 1 lb cod fillets, skin removed, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 lb sea scallops, halved crosswise if large
- 1 dozen mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- 1 dozen littleneck clams (or other small clams), scrubbed

Finish & Garnish

¹If unavailable, use clam juice or a mix of fish stock and water.

- 1 tablespoon anise-flavored liqueur (Pernod, Pastis, ouzo, or sambuca)
- 3 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, minced
- Sliced sourdough baguette, for serving

Instructions

1. **Sauté aromatics.** Heat olive oil in a heavy pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add fennel and onion; cook, stirring, about 10 minutes until tender.
2. **Bloom spices.** Stir in garlic, fennel seeds, and red pepper flakes; cook 2 minutes until fragrant.
3. **Build the broth.** Add crushed tomatoes, seafood stock, wine, 1 tablespoon kosher salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered 30 minutes.
4. **Add seafood in order.** Add seafood gently in layers: first cod, then shrimp, then scallops, and finally mussels and clams. Do not stir. Bring just to a simmer, reduce heat, cover, and cook about 10 minutes, until seafood is opaque and shellfish open.
5. **Finish.** Stir in the anise liqueur carefully (avoid breaking the fish). Cover and rest 3 minutes so flavors meld. Discard any unopened mussels or clams.
6. **Serve.** Ladle into warm shallow bowls, sprinkle with parsley, and serve with crusty sourdough.

Notes & Tips

- **Shellfish prep:** Scrub shells; soak mussels 30 minutes in cold water with a few tablespoons flour to help purge grit, then rinse.
- **Shrimp:** For easier eating, peel and remove tails before cooking.
- **Make-ahead:** Prepare broth base up to 2 days ahead; refrigerate. Reheat, then add seafood just before serving.
- **Wine choice:** Use a dry white you would drink (e.g., Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc). Avoid “cooking wine.”
- **Liqueur swap:** Pernod is classic; Pastis, ouzo, or sambuca work too. A little goes a long way.

What to Serve

Garlic bread; Caesar or chopped Italian salad; simple pasta (e.g., cacio e pepe); kale salad with Parmesan and pine nuts.

Nutrition (Approximate, per serving; 6 servings)

Calories	373 kcal
Carbohydrates	11 g
Protein	42 g
Fat	12 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Cholesterol	241 mg
Sodium	1467 mg
Potassium	905 mg
Fiber	1 g
Sugar	2 g
Vitamin A	285 IU
Vitamin C	13.4 mg
Calcium	209 mg
Iron	3.2 mg

Credit: Adapted from Ina Garten, Cook Like a Pro. For a French cousin, see bouillabaisse (fish-stock base with saffron).