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## Pescado en Escabeche (Maricel E. Presilla's Fish with Escabeche Sauce)

The cooks of Islamic Spain, or Al-Andalus, like the Romans before them, had a penchant for using vinegar-and-olive oil pickling sauces, or *escabeches*, to flavor and preserve everything from fish to vegetables. The technique survived the demise of Al-Andalus in Spain, as well as in many former Spanish colonies. In my native Cuba, *escabeche* was synonymous with *sierra* (sawfish), much appreciated for its firm, white flesh. You could go to any cafeteria or restaurant and always find on the countertop a large earthenware *cazuela* filled with fried sawfish steaks topped with an olive oil-and-vinegar pickling sauce. Cuban *escabeches* often resemble contemporary Iberian models, simply seasoned with garlic, sliced yellow onion and bell pepper, and some bay leaf. Because escabeches start with a sofrito, the iconic Spanish and Latin American flavor base subject to infinite permutations, it is not surprising to see that *escabeches*, too, vary tremendously across Latin America. But vinegar and olive oil remain the backbone of this singular, ocean-spanning technique. —Maricel E. Presilla, author of *Gran Cocina*

Latina: The Food of Latin America

([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0393050696/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0393050696/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0393050696&linkCode=as2&tag=saveur-20)

[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0393050696&linkCode=as2&tag=saveur-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0393050696/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0393050696&linkCode=as2&tag=saveur-20)) (W.W. Norton & Company, 2012)

SERVES 6

### INGREDIENTS

6 (8-oz.) swordfish steaks, cut 1/2" thick  
12 cloves garlic, minced  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
2 cups flour  
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
4 bay leaves  
2 large green bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1/4"-thick rings  
1 large yellow onion, cut into 1/4"-thick rings  
2 cups distilled white vinegar

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rub fish with half the garlic, and season with salt and pepper on both sides; let sit for 20 minutes. Place flour in a shallow plate, and dredge each fish steak in flour to coat, shaking to remove excess.

2. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add fish steaks, and cook, turning once, until browned on both sides and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer fish steaks to a serving bowl or platter; set aside. Add remaining garlic to oil, and cook, stirring, until golden brown, about 1 minute. Add bay leaves, peppers, and onion, and cook, stirring, until softened, about 4 minutes. Add vinegar, and bring to a boil; cook for 2 minutes. Pour over fish steaks and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour before serving.



*Credit: Penny De los Santos*

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