

Provençal Marinated Fennel

10 servings

Ingredients:

4 firm fennel bulbs
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 celery rib, cut crosswise into thin slices
1 leek, white and light-green parts cut crosswise into thin rounds
3 large cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp thyme leaves
2 bay leaves
2 tbsp pine nuts
1.5 cup dry white wine
2 tbsp raisins or dried currants
2 tbsp minced flat-leaf parsley
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

Trim the fennel bulbs, cutting off the stalks and some of the root end and removing the bulb's tough outer layer. Then cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch slices.

Choose a skillet or saucepan large enough to hold all the fennel; in it, combine the olive oil, salt and pepper to taste, celery, leek, crushed garlic, thyme and bay leaves. Place over medium heat. As soon as the vegetables start to sizzle, add the pine nuts. Cook for about 5 minutes or just until the pine nuts start to brown, then add the fennel, stirring the contents of the skillet or saucepan until the fennel is well coated.

Add the wine and increase the heat to medium-high until it just comes to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until the fennel is just tender; the cooking time will depend on the thickness of the slices.

Uncover, then add the raisins and stir to mix well. Increase the heat to medium or medium-high to bring the liquid to a boil; cook for about 10 minutes and then add half of the parsley, stirring to mix well. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, until the liquid has reduced to a syrup. Discard the bay leaves.

Sprinkle with the remaining parsley.

Serve at room temperature along with the chicken and the gratin.