

Baked Anchovies

Serves 4 to 6

680 grams • 1½ pounds whole fresh anchovies
extra virgin olive oil
kosher salt and black pepper
2 lemons
about ½ cup dry breadcrumbs
10 bay leaves

Clean each fish under cold running water: run a small spoon from the tail end toward the head to gently scrape away the scales. Rinse well. Using kitchen shears, make a cut behind the head and gills, stopping just short of cutting all the way through the belly. Let the head fall away and gently pull the innards out. Rinse the anchovy well and place on a bed of ice while you clean the remaining fish. Using kitchen shears, gently cut through the belly from the head toward the tail. With the shears, snip the spine just before the tail (leave the tail intact). With your fingers, open the anchovy up like a book. Gently pull out the backbone and pinbones.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Oil a 9 by 13-inch casserole. Slice one of the lemons crosswise into rounds. Cut the other lemon into wedges for serving.

Spread the cleaned fish out on a baking sheet or platter and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle the fish with enough olive oil to coat, then sprinkle with about ¼ cup of the breadcrumbs or enough to coat them lightly. Tuck the anchovies crosswise into the casserole and sprinkle with more breadcrumbs to barely cover. Nestle the lemon rounds and bay leaves in among the fish. Drizzle with additional oil and bake for 8 to 12 minutes or until the breadcrumbs are golden brown and crisp and the fish is cooked through. Serve with lemon wedges on the side.



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