

Butter-Poached Lobster with Mascarpone Orzo

Serves 6

Adapted from Thomas Keller's *French Laundry Cookbook*

- 3 live lobsters, 1.5 – 2 lbs each
- ¼ cup white vinegar
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1.5 cups chopped tomatoes
- ½ cup peeled, chopped carrots
- ½ oz tarragon
- 2 cups heavy cream
- ½ cup orzo
- 2 Tb Mascarpone cheese
- Salt
- ¾ lb unsalted butter, cut into chunks
- Chives for garnish

Partially cook the lobsters – Add enough water to a large empty pot (4 quarts should be about right) to cover the lobsters. Boil the water, then add the vinegar. Turn off the heat and add the lobsters to the pot. Allow to steep for 2 minutes (for 1.5 lb lobsters) or 3 minutes (for 2 lb lobsters). Remove the lobsters from the water-vinegar mixture. Using gloves or a towel, twist the tail in one direction to remove from the body. Twist the arms (claws and knuckles) from the body and return them to the pot for another 5 minutes, after which you remove them from the water.

Remove the meat from the shells – to remove the tail meat, twist the tail fan in one direction to remove, then use your fingers to push the meat out of the shell. Cut the tail meat in half lengthwise and remove the large vein. To remove the claw meat, separate the claw from the knuckle and pull the small pincer down until it is very loose. Move it back and forth horizontally until it separates. Crack the shell and attempt to remove claw meat in one piece. Discard any cartilage. Use scissors to make a cut in each knuckle shell and remove the meat. Place all of the meat on a paper-towel-lined plate and cover tightly with plastic. Refrigerate until ready to use. Rinse the shells to use for the orzo.

Make lobster stock for the orzo – Heat some canola oil over medium-high heat. Sear the lobster shells, working in batches, until they turn red. Add the tomatoes, tarragon, and carrots plus enough water to cover everything. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer for one hour, skimming off any foam. Strain the stock through a fine mesh strainer. Discard the lobster shells and vegetables. Return the liquid to the pot and simmer until only one cup remains. Add the heavy cream and simmer until reduced to the consistency of a sauce. Strain into a container and refrigerate until ready to use – up to 2 or 3 days.

Make the orzo – Bring a pot of salted water to a boil and cook orzo just until tender. Strain and rinse under cold water. Add to the lobster stock/cream mixture. Place the orzo and sauce into a small saucepan and keep warm.

Butter-poach the lobster – Remove the lobster meat from the fridge and allow to come to room temperature for several minutes. In a saucepan, heat 2 Tb of water to a boil. Add a couple of chunks of the butter. Whisk to form an emulsion. Reduce heat to low and continue whisking in butter one chunk at a time. Add the lobster and cook for 5 or 6 minutes.

While the lobster is cooking, whisk 2 Tb mascarpone cheese into the orzo. Season with salt. Spoon some of the orzo onto each of 6 plates. When the lobster is done, place meat on top of orzo and garnish with chives. Serve immediately.