



How to make a bouquet garni

Add a little 'je ne sais quoi' to your cooking by making a little bundle of garden herbs to pop into stocks, soups, and stews.

French for 'garnished bouquet', it is believed that these aromatic herb bunches have been used by French and British cooks since the 1600s.

The delicate herbs add subtle flavouring to the cooked dishes.

Step 1. Traditionally, the classic bouquet garni consists of a few sprigs of thyme, several stalks of parsley and a couple of bay leaves.

However, if you have a favourite herb, or are making a dish that calls out for a particular herb e.g., fennel or dill with a fishy dish, add a few stems to the bunch. A skinny stalk of celery helps add a culinary kick.

A length of unwaxed kitchen string (or dental floss works too) is used to secure the bunch of herb stems. You can make an even more elaborate version by encasing the herb ingredients along with some peppercorns in a muslin cloth, and securing with string.



Step 2 Tie securely

Step 2. Take a length of string, and tie securely approx. 1/3 way up the stems to help prevent the bundle dismantling during the cooking process.

Step 3. Using a pair of kitchen scissors, cut the stems of herbs to roughly the same length, approx 8cm, keeping the bay leaves whole if possible.

Step 4. Traditional recipes will call for the bouquet garni to be added into the cooking pot at the simmering stage. Modern day recipes may not call for such an ingredient, however, soups, bolognese sauces, casseroles amongst others, can all benefit from the subtle addition of the fresh herbs' flavouring.

Step 5. Remove the bouquet garni in its entirety from the cooking mixture before blending, or serving. We don't want the slightly toughened herbs ruining the dish if they get caught up in a forkful of fresh bolognese pasta.

Top tip: Although harvesting your own garden herbs from late Spring through to Autumn to make bouquets garnis gives the most pleasure, most supermarkets carry a selection of fresh herb stems year round, so even the heartiest of Winter stews can be created with a serving of *je ne sais quoi!*



Bouquet garni



Materials required



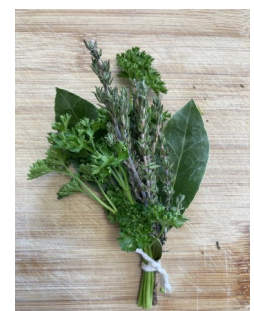
Thyme and Parsley



Bay leaves



Step 3 Trim stalks



Ready for the pot

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