Smoky Lemon–Fennel Cioppino

Tomato–fennel broth with cod, shrimp and mussels, a hint of smoke and a bright lemon finish.



4 generous bowls · Prep 20 min · Cook 45 min · Total about 65 min Thaw frozen fish/shrimp overnight first (extra time).

INGREDIENTS / 4 BOWLS

2 tbsp olive oil

1 medium onion, finely diced

1 small fennel bulb, cored, thinly sliced

4 garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp tomato paste

1/2 tsp smoked paprika + 1/2 tsp oregano

1/4 tsp red-pepper flakes (optional)

1/2 cup dry white wine, or extra stock

1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes

2 cups low-sodium seafood stock

1 cup bottled clam juice

1 bay leaf

1/2 tsp fine salt + 1/4 tsp black pepper

1 lb cod, in 1-inch chunks

3/4 lb large raw shrimp, peeled/deveined

1 lb live mussels, scrubbed/debearded

1 lemon: 1 tsp zest + 1 tbsp juice; reserve 4 small wedges (optional)

2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

4 slices crusty bread (optional)

EQUIPMENT

5–6-quart stew pot; second lidded pot with fitted steamer basket holding mussels above water; thin-tip food thermometer; clean bowl for cooked mussels; separate raw-seafood tools, measures and shallow leftover containers.

SIX CLEAR STEPS

1 · Prep safely. Wash hands 20 seconds; rinse and cut produce before seafood. Keep seafood cold; use separate raw tools. Scrub/debeard mussels. Discard cracked shells or ones not closing after a tap; add only closed, live mussels. Clean hands, tools and surfaces after raw contact.

2 · Soften. In the stew pot, heat oil over medium. Cook onion, fennel, salt and pepper 8 min, stirring. Add garlic, paste, paprika, oregano and optional flakes; stir 2 min. Add wine or replacement stock; simmer 2 min.

3 · Simmer. Add tomatoes, 2 cups stock, clam juice and bay. Allow about 5 min to reach a simmer; simmer uncovered 15 min. Start the separate steamer during the final 12 min (overlapping).

4 · Steam mussels. In a second lidded pot, vigorously boil 1 inch water below a fitted basket. Add mussels above water to the already steaming basket; cover. Once steady steam resumes, steam 9 min, maintaining steam. Open lid away from face. Discard all not fully open. Move open mussels to a clean bowl; cover briefly. Discard steam water.

5 · Check 145°F. Gently simmer cod and shrimp in broth about 6–8 min, longer if needed. Probe several thickest pieces sideways, away from broth: both must reach 145°F (63°C). Clean probe after under-temperature checks. Fish flakes; shrimp are firm, pearly/opaque. Time and color alone are not enough.

6 · Finish. Return mussels; heat about 2 min until hot. Remove bay. Off heat add all zest, juice and parsley. Divide into 4 bowls; optional 1 lemon wedge and 1 bread slice each. Serve now.

Before cooking: buy from a reliable regulated seller; check shellfish tags. Raw seafood ≤40°F (4°C), cook within 2 days or earlier label deadline. Keep live mussels cold, breathable, never airtight or submerged in fresh/melted-ice water; follow seller guidance. Thaw fish/shrimp in fridge.

Leftovers: promptly divide into shallow containers; refrigerate ≤40°F (4°C) within 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F / 32°C). No full-pot counter cooling. Count prep/serving exposure cumulatively; discard if exceeded. Use within 2 days from cooking or earlier ingredient deadline: our conservative choice, not validated shelf life (USDA generally 3–4 days). Reheat stew to a rolling boil and seafood to 165°F (74°C).

Allergens: fish, shrimp, mussels/clam juice; check stock, wine and bread labels (wheat; wine sulfites). Wine cooking is not an alcohol-free guarantee; use stock instead.

Inspiration: Cozy Oven Recipes' "Easy Cioppino (Seafood Stew)" public caption. Separately consulted: Chungah, Damn Delicious, "Easy Cioppino (Seafood Stew)." Safety: FDA seafood handling / 145°F · CDC in-shell steaming / fully open shells · USDA rapid cooling / 165°F reheating.

RECIPE NOTE

Not kitchen-tested; quantities, yield and times are estimates. AI-generated serving illustration.

Sources: [1] facebook.com · [2] damndelicious.net · [3] fda.gov · [4] cdc.gov · [5] fsis.usda.gov