

a certain quantity, it was usually made for a group of people eating together. This suited the particular culture of Marseille, where teams of fishermen, or family groups could fish from the rocks, and eat their meal together in situ, cooked in a big dish on a fire made amongst the rocks. It was not a dish which anyone could eat alone, but belonged to the culture of the group.

Andre Soares, usually so sardonic about his home-city of Marseille, describes in *Marsiho* the almost idyllic lifestyle of the true eaters of bouillabaisse, spending their spare time in the cabanons, the huts beside the sea:

Several men go fishing amongst the rocks: they leave in the early morning, their rods held high against their shoulders, waistcoat open, flannel shirts gaping; all have the same joyful appearance, a happy troop going down to capture the fish. Even those who don't fish are no less avid than the others for the racasse, girolles, gobis, crabs, and all that goes in the bouillabaisse... Is it not admirable that such people have found a recipe for happiness, even if it is a little dull to find it in a garlic sauce and a fish soup.

The stew is served over thick slices of bread, rubbed with garlic or with rouille (a spicy sauce of breadcrumbs, olive oil and chillis). The fish are served separately, whole but with the head, spine and bones removed. There may also be an accompaniment of aïoli (a sauce, similar to mayonnaise, of egg yolks, garlic, mustard and olive oil).

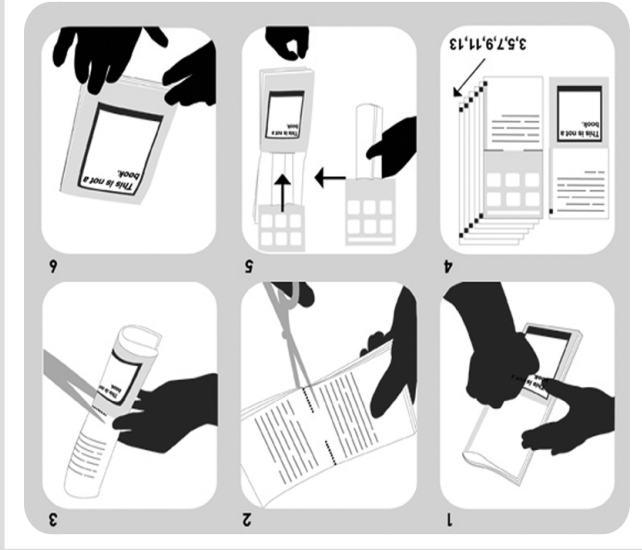
The bouillabaisse is a communal dish. Originally it was made mostly from fish which could not be sold, fish which were ugly or not valued at the market. Since bouillabaisse needs a considerable variety of fish, and therefore needs to be made in

guted and cleaned). The bouillabaisse is ready. It should be served immediately. five minutes (the fish are whole, but have been to what is available in the market. Boil for four or add the scorpion fish and other fishes, according with boiling water. After five minutes, no more, angler fish and the conger - compulsory. Cover create a mix of the water and oil. Put in the Soak in cold water. Ten minutes of fast boiling to tomatoes, four fine potatoes, cut in thick slices. than four kilos of prepared fish. Four fine kilos of whole fish (except for the angler fish, which should have the head removed), or less

Marseille Mix: turn down the heat

William Firebrace





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William Firebrace
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A mix does not imply that anything can be mixed to anything. A mix is not all inclusive. A mix is not a stew into which any ingredient may be thrown.

If Marseille is a mix, then it is also a particular kind of mix, with particular elements added in a particular way, in a particular sequence. Some of these elements have been planned, most have emerged due to force of circumstances. Having become mixed together, often in ways that are no longer visible, the elements are then accepted and become formalised. Certain aspects of the mix, their unacceptably rough origins suitably concealed, become transformed and taken in as part of the bourgeois world. The gastronomic version of this city mix is bouillabaisse.

Marseille and bouillabaisse go together. The dish is a cliché image of the city, an instant association for visitors - and also part of its deeper reality.

The dish has not one form but many, for there are innumerable receipts for bouillabaisse. Various restaurants in Marseille claim their recipe is the only authentic version, against the dubious degraded concoctions of their rivals. Lying somewhere amongst these kitchen squabbles is the usual Marseille search for a kind of origin, an origin which is long since lost and which probably

This is a fragment from *Marseille Mix*, a forthcoming book exploring the city's literary, criminal, urban, gastronomic and cinematic aspects.

They lay, contented, in the darkness, listening to the fine sound of the traffic passing below.

Passion? More passion! Passion for the sea. Passion for its currents and depths. Only this feeling for the sea makes it possible for us to carry on living in this city.

It's all an affair of fish, replied Sparrow, still breathing heavily. Fish and cookery and passion. *cooking, if only, ... well, that would be real ...*

There are even claims that recipe for bouillabaisse was brought from the east by the Phocéans, so that the two unreliable myths of origin, of the city and of its dish, can be conveniently combined into one story, the worthy philosopher Greeks happily matched to authentic gastronomy of the sea.

There also those who claim firmly that authentic bouillabaisse can only be made in Marseille and its surroundings, because it is a dish of the fishermen of the calenques, of the limestone coves, made with the rock-fish from here and nowhere else. If it escapes these pure and simple origins it can no longer be real bouillabaisse. But like other fish stews, such as the zarzuela, from Catalonia and the caldeirada from Portugal, the dish has travelled outwards from its point of origin, and long become part of international gastronomy. It is clearly different from soupe de poissons, which is mere fish soup, or bourride, which made only with seabass. But so-called bouillabaisse is sometimes found with squids, with shellfish, with egg yolks, with spinach, with celery, with chillis or cayenne pepper, with any number of other despised gastronomic heresies. The worst heresy for Marseille, bordering on

some imaginary conversation taking place between humble fisherman and buyers. The waiters moved their arms with a sneering grace. Sparrow nodded in a knowing way. They waited a long while, engaged in an erratic group conversation. The wine was poured out, tasted, served. Nothing in particular seemed to be happening, but this seemed to be a part of the ceremony.

Everything to be slowed down, formalised, made almost absurd, as though something of vital importance was about to happen. The soup with the bread and the rouille was brought on and served out with care and precision. There was another long pause. Sparrow gazed again, sidewise at Sophia. Around them the restaurant seemed to be almost silent, in spite of the number of diners. Then came the fish, still whole, on their own plate, served by the waiters as a piece of distant theatre. The food was excellent but the environment so artificial that everything tasted faded, distant.

If only, said Sophia as she lay with Sparrow later in the bed of his hotel room, *if only the world of the original fishermen still existed, the rocks by the sea, the spray, the fire, the pan, the huts, the*

criminality, is naturally the Bouillabaisse Parisienne, a contradiction in terms, where butter is used instead of oil, and where even Pernod may be added.

The origin of the name has, appropriately enough for a dish of disputed origins, various explanations. It may come from the provençal *bouiabaissa* or *bolhabaisa*, meaning that the temperature of the liquid should be lowered. Or from the provençal *bouipeis*, combining boiling and fish (peis). Or again from the provençal, implying that the pot is *bout en bas* placed low down on a fire lit amongst some stones, cooking the fish which are not suitable to be sold. At any rate there is agreement that the source is provençal.

Amongst the fish found acceptable for a true bouillabaisse, according to the Marseille poet Henri Deluy, are racasse (angler fish) fielas (conga eel), vive (weever fish), loup (seabass), saint-pierre (john dory), grondin (gurnard), baudroie (angler), galinette (?), rouget (mullet), sar (silver bream), murene (moray eel), anguille (eel), labre (wrasse), garri (?), bavarelle (?), sole (sole), cavillon (gurnard), chapon (?), pajot (?), rouquier (red mullet?), (golddsinny wrasse)

It was evening time. Sparrow and some acquaintances, Sophia, Michele, Doria, Marcel, Robert and some others of uncertain names were sitting in a restaurant beside the Vieux Port. Sparrow hated to eat in a group and had only come because of Sophia, with whom his relationship held some promise of development. He glanced at her, but she seemed to ignore him. The table was dressed immaculately in white cloth. Smartly dressed waiters brought in the fish to be inspected for freshness. There seemed to be

Many of these fish from the calenques have now become rarer, and more expensive to catch. Ugly fish like angler fish, once frowned upon, have become more acceptable to diners. The poor of Marseille can certainly no longer afford 'authentic' bouillabaisse. Its place as a popular dish has long been taken by the couscous, the pizza and other convenience meals. It might be said that real bouillabaisse actually no longer exists, because the culture which produced it has now vanished. Both fishing and families have changed. You need a group to eat bouillabaisse, you cannot eat it alone.

(comber) saurel (mackerel) and various others. Some of these names from the fish terminology of Marseille become inevitably lost in the many different spellings and local terms for varieties of fish. Some varieties may only exist in the coves south of Marseille, but the ecology of these coves is changing, along with the ecology of the Mediterranean, and the varieties of fish inhabiting particular waters is thus changing also. In a recent addition of *La Pensee du Midi*, Henri Deluy gives the following 'lightly subversive' advice on the bouillabaisse made by his family in Gordes. He recommends that the bouillabaisse should be cooked in a garibaldi, a pot wider at the top than the base, to allow the flavour of the fish to be concentrated, and the stock to cook rapidly. A handful of favouilles (small crabs) give their flavour to a good quantity of hot olive oil. After several minutes of heat, take out the crabs. Add to the oil a large chopped onion, two chopped leeks, five or six cloves of garlic, some parsley, a bulb of fennel, zest of orange, some grains of pepper. Warm them up, without letting them go brown. Two or three pinches of saffron - for eight guests (minimum number of diners) and eight