

PRAWNS AND BROAD BEANS WITH PAPRIKA OIL



Ingredients

Serves 4 as a starter

- 500g whole raw prawns, shells on
- 150ml good extra virgin olive oil
- 4 fat garlic cloves, thickly sliced
- 1 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 150g frozen broad beans
- Salt
- Juice of 1/2 a lemon
- 4 thick slices of sourdough, toasted

This is essentially a take on gambas al ajillo, the Spanish classic, but with one extra step that makes all the difference. You fry the prawn heads and shells first in a generous amount of olive oil until it turns deep red and tastes entirely of the sea, then discard everything but the oil. What you're left with is an intensely flavoured cooking fat that does all the heavy lifting. The actual cooking after that takes about four minutes.

The broad beans are optional as the dish is excellent without them, but they add a little sweetness and freshness against all that smoky paprika. The bread underneath, however, is not optional.

Method

- 1.** Peel the prawns, keeping the heads and shells to the side. Heat the olive oil in a wide frying pan over a medium-high heat and add the heads and shells. Fry for 3-4 minutes, pressing down on them as they cook so they release all their flavour into the oil. The oil should turn a deep burnished red and smell incredible.
- 2.** Strain through a sieve into a bowl or jug, pressing firmly on the shells to extract every last drop, then discard them. You can make the oil a day ahead and keep it in the fridge.
- 3.** If using frozen broad beans, pour over just-boiled water and leave for a minute before draining. Peel away the grey outer skins to reveal the bright green beans inside. It's optional, but worth the extra few minutes.
- 4.** Return the cooled prawn oil to the pan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and let it sizzle gently for a minute then add the prawns and cook for about a minute on each side until pink and just curled, then stir through the paprika and broad beans.
- 5.** Finish with the lemon juice and a good pinch of salt, then spoon everything over the toasted bread, making sure all the paprika-red oil goes over too.