

Ragout of sautéed turbot with serrano ham, spring vegetables and pea shoots

As I say at the back of the book, turbot is possibly the best-tasting fish in the world. Don't think that this has to be made with expensive turbot, however. You can use any firm-textured fish.

Alternative fish: John Dory, gurnard, flathead, monkfish

Serves 4 as a first course

40g fresh or frozen peas	40g serrano ham, cut into strips
60g courgettes, thinly sliced	10g preserved lemon, finely chopped
100g small asparagus, cut on the diagonal into 1cm pieces	200ml Chicken stock (see page 310)
250g turbot fillet, skinned, cut into 6-7cm pieces	1 tsp white miso paste
1 tbsp vegetable oil	30g pea shoots
40g unsalted butter	Salt

Blanch the vegetables in boiling salted water as follows: peas 30 seconds; courgettes 30 seconds; asparagus 60 seconds.

Season the turbot pieces with a little salt and fry over a moderate heat using the vegetable oil and ½ teaspoon of the butter.

Put the ham, preserved lemon, chicken stock and miso paste into a small pan. Bring to the boil, add the rest of the butter and boil rapidly for a minute to emulsify the butter and reduce the volume a little.

Stir in the vegetables and pea shoots, warm through and pour into 4 warmed soup plates. Top with the turbot pieces.

Chicken stock

Makes 1.5 litres

Bones from a 1.5kg uncooked chicken or 500g chicken wings or the leftovers from a roast chicken

1 large carrot, chopped

2 celery sticks, sliced

2 leeks, sliced

2 fresh or dried bay leaves

2 sprigs of thyme

2.5 litres water

Put all the ingredients into a large pan and bring just to the boil, skimming off any scum from the surface as it appears. Leave to simmer very gently for 2 hours – it is important not to let it boil as this will form an emulsion between fat and water and make the stock cloudy. Strain the stock through a fine sieve and use as required. If not using immediately, leave to cool, then chill and refrigerate or freeze.