

# Peperonata in Bagna cauda

## Grilled Peppers in Anchovy Sauce

Serves 4

**PREP TIME**

15 minutes

**COOK TIME**

1 hour

**INGREDIENTS**

18 cloves garlic

24 anchovy fillets in oil

$\frac{5}{8}$  cup (150 ml) mild extra virgin olive oil

2 cups (480 ml) whole milk

3  $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp. (50 g) butter

2 red bell peppers

1 yellow bell pepper

Fine sea salt

*Bagna cauda is a typical rustic fall dish from the Piedmont region. It is usually eaten warm, and the name even means “warm sauce.” Little ceramic teapot warmers, called fojòts, are placed on the table in front of each person to keep the food warm, transforming the meal into a social occasion, much like fondue. Traditionally, raw vegetables such as celery, carrots, artichokes, and fennel are dipped in the sauce. The intensity of the flavor is exhilarating, but surprising to the untrained palate. In this version of the recipe, the intensity is tempered by adding milk and butter, rounding off the bold flavors somewhat. The use of grilled peppers with this recipe is very popular in the Piedmont region’s eateries, and it is often served as a starter, both hot and cold.*

Peel the garlic cloves, halve them, and remove the germ, or core. Dab the anchovy fillets with a paper towel. Place the garlic cloves in a small saucepan, add enough water to cover them, and simmer for about 15 minutes until they are soft, then drain and dry them.

In a medium-sized pot, heat  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml) of the olive oil over low heat, add the garlic and sardines, and use a wooden spoon to combine thoroughly and form a paste. Gradually pour in the milk and simmer for a total of 1 hour. Towards the end, add the butter in flakes and stir in another  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml) of olive oil.

Wash the peppers and remove the core and white membranes. Cut into slices the width of a finger and season with salt. Coat the peppers in the remaining olive oil, then sauté them in a hot grill pan, allowing the skins to burn slightly. Remove the peppers from the pan and place them with the inside facing down and the skins facing up. Place a cold, wet tea towel on top of them for a few minutes, then peel the skins off the pepper strips.

Place the peppers on a plate and spread the warm *bagna cauda* on top.

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**OUR TIP** This intensely flavored antipasto goes well with a strong red wine from the Piedmont region, such as a young Barbera or a Nebbiolo.

