

# Monkfish, cedar and basque whisky

by [Elena Arzak](#)

[Main](#) [Challenging](#) 4 4 hours



This beautiful [Basque](#) dish from Elena Arzak uses monkfish in four different ways - the monkfish liver is used in a mejo sauce and as a marinade for monkfish skin, thin slices of Basque [whiskey](#) and cedar-smoked monkfish are shaved into paper thin circles, and the skins are deep fried into crisps. It's served alongside a crumpled spinach pasta crisp and an airy [avocado](#) meringue. In the restaurant, Chef Arzak crimps the spinach pasta with corrugated metal sheets in the deep fryer, but they can also be fried straight.

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## Ingredients

[METRIC](#) [IMPERIAL](#)

### MONKFISH LIVER MEJO SAUCE

- 200g of monkfish liver
- 1/2 spring onion, thinly sliced and fried in olive oil over a low heat
- 90g of brandy
- 1 sun-dried tomato
- 2 tsp Napa pepper paste
- 1/2 garlic clove
- oil
- salt
- coarsely ground black pepper

### MONKFISH LOIN

- 1 monkfish loin, cut into four
- coarse sea salt, enough to cover the monkfish

### MONKFISH CIRCLES

- 250ml of brandy, mixed with the cedar wood chips, for smoking the monkfish circles
- 100g of monkfish skin
- 80g of coarse sea salt

### MONKFISH SKIN CRISPS

- 1.5l water
- 500g of monkfish skin
- 1 leek, greens parts only, roughly sliced
- 1 small onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- vegetable oil, for frying
- salt

### WHISKEY SAUCE

- 250g of sun-dried tomatoes
- 50g of butter, melted
- 350g of chicken stock
- 45g of whiskey
- 50g of sake
- 50g of cane sugar
- 1/2 orange, zested
- salt
- freshly ground black pepper

### AVOCADO MERINGUE

- 1 avocado
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 tsp olive oil
- salt
- 90g of Italian meringue

### SPINACH TILÉ

- 120g of spinach
- 1 medium egg
- 100g of water
- 300g of plain flour
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 4g of salt
- vegetable oil, for frying

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## Equipment

- Thermomix
- Pasta machine
- Smoker

## Method

- 1 Clean the monkfish livers well, and chop into small pieces
    - 200g of monkfish liver
  - 2 Sauté the monkfish livers in a pan. Once they have turned golden, add the poached spring onion. Sauté well and flambé with the brandy
    - 1/2 spring onion, thinly sliced and fried in olive oil over a low heat
    - 90g of brandy
  - 3 Using a mortar and pestle, pound all the remaining ingredients
    - 2 tsp Napa pepper paste
  - 4 Once this is done, add the cooked liver and spring onion mixture to the mortar and mash again
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- 5 Place a pan on the heat and add a little oil. Transfer the mixture from the mortar and pestle to the hot pan, and sauté. Season with salt and pepper
    - oil
    - salt
    - coarsely ground black pepper
  - 6 Pass the mixture through a fine sieve, so that it becomes creamy. Set aside
  - 7 For the mejo monkfish, cover the four pieces of monkfish loin in salt for 3 minutes
    - 1 monkfish loin, cut into four
  - 8 Wash off the salt with cold water. Dry thoroughly
  - 9 Spread the loins with the monkfish liver mejo sauce
  - 10 Cook the monkfish on a plancha (cast iron griddle pan)
  - 11 For the monkfish circles, drain the whiskey-soaked wood chips and add them to a smoker
    - 250ml of brandy, mixed with the cedar wood chips, for smoking the monkfish circles
  - 12 Cover the monkfish with coarse sea salt for 7 minutes
    - 100g of monkfish skin
    - 80g of coarse sea salt
  - 13 Remove the salt, using a damp cloth, and dry the fish well
  - 14 Smoke the monkfish with the whiskey-soaked cedar wood for 7 minutes
  - 15 Shape into a cylinder using cling film, and freeze until solid. This will be sliced into thin circles just before serving
  - 16 For the monkfish skin crisps, place the water, monkfish skin, leek, onion and salt in a pan. Cook over a medium heat for 90 minutes, then blend. Strain out the liquid
    - 1.5l water
    - 500g of monkfish skin
    - 1 leek, greens parts only, roughly sliced
    - 1 small onion, peeled and roughly chopped
    - salt
  - 17 Place the mixture into square moulds and freeze until solid
  - 18 Slice the frozen monkfish skin mixture into 5mm slices. Pat dry
  - 19 Deep fry the monkfish skins for just a few seconds. Season with salt and set aside
    - vegetable oil, for frying
    - salt
  - 20 For the whiskey sauce, bring the sun-dried tomatoes, butter, chicken stock, whiskey, sake, sugar, orange zest and some salt and pepper to a simmer
    - 250g of sun-dried tomatoes
    - 50g of butter, melted
    - 350g of chicken stock
    - 45g of whiskey
    - 50g of sake
    - 10g of cane sugar
    - 1/2 orange, zested
    - salt
    - freshly ground black pepper
  - 21 Blend the mixture together and then strain. Season to taste
  - 22 For the avocado meringue, mix the avocado, lemon juice, olive oil and salt in the Thermomix until you get a smooth paste. Strain
    - 1 avocado
    - 1 lemon, juiced
    - 2 tsp olive oil
    - salt
  - 23 Fold the avocado paste into the meringue. Set aside
    - 90g of Italian meringue
  - 24 For the spinach tilé, mix the spinach together with the egg in the Thermomix
    - 120g of spinach
    - 1 medium egg
  - 25 Add the water, plain flour, olive oil and salt and mix again
    - 100g of water
    - 300g of plain flour
    - 1 tsp olive oil
    - 4g of salt
  - 26 Next, knead the mixture in a bowl until it does not stick to your hands. Let it rest, covered, for 30 minutes
  - 27 Roll out the dough in a pasta machine until you reach the thinnest setting
  - 28 Cut into 10x7cm squares, and deep fry until crisp. Set aside
    - vegetable oil, for frying
  - 29 To serve, first thinly slice the frozen monkfish circles. Place the monkfish circles in the middle of the plate, and top with the avocado meringue
  - 30 Dress the mejo-marinated monkfish with extra sauce and place it to one side of the plate. Lean a spinach pasta crisp against it. Dot remaining sauce next to the fish
  - 31 Break up the fried monkfish skins and arrange on the other side of the plate



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