

I've always had a thing for olives. When I was about eight years old, I can remember wanting big dishes of them with my birthday dinner. The freedom to eat as many as I wanted was so exciting for me.

The texture and flavour are so appealing. A few olives with some dry salami and crusty bread is pretty much a perfect lunch for me.

Even though there are so many varieties of olives available, this recipe brings them to a whole new level. Whether you're trying an imported jar of huge green olives, or are wondering what you'll ever do with that can of pitted black olives, this works well for all. The olives are heated in olive oil with citrus peel, fennel seeds and a pinch of chilies. They're served warm and the flavoured oil is fabulous soaked into bread.

Warmed Olives with Citrus & Fennel

Ingredients

A mix of olives: I've used about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of brined mammoth greens, and the same amount of Kalamata. Both are pitted.

2 wide strips of lemon peel, with most of the pith scraped away.

2 wide strips of orange peel, with most of the pith scraped away.

1 T fennel seeds

a couple of pinches of dried chilies

Extra virgin olive oil

Directions

Arrange the olives in the bottom of a heavy saucepan. They should be about one layer deep, it's okay if there are a few sticking up.

Sprinkle with the chilies and fennel.

Insert the citrus strips.

Pour in enough extra virgin olive oil to come at least halfway up the main layer of olives.

Over medium-low heat, bring to a simmer.

Continue simmering over the lowest heat for 20 - 30 minutes. Stirring occasionally, keeping the citrus submerged.

Carefully pour into a bowl and serve with a slotted spoon. Remove the citrus if it has become too discoloured.

Refrigerate leftovers after 2 hours. Can be reheated.

Use as part of an appetizer buffet or as an accent to the main meal.