



## AIOLI

## For the Love of Good Food

Emperor Nero is said to have invented aioli, the olive oil and garlic-laced mother of mayonnaise. It is a popular garlic recipe in Provence, the southeastern region of France, where garlic is called the poor man's spice. Roasting a whole head of garlic wrapped in foil slowly in the oven for about 1 hour or more, drizzled with a little oil can make to most delicious sweet buttery spread.

In summer, entire villages hold food festivals featuring aioli often called the "Butter of France". For an aphrodisiacal treat use it as a dip for either artichokes or asparagus. Or for a full-blown Provencal Sunday afternoon banquet serve with a table laden with baby boiled potatoes, steamed baby carrots, artichokes, boiled eggs, cooked shrimp, chicken pieces and any crudités that appeal. Add some crusty bread and a robust rose wine and you are set for an indulgent lazy afternoon.

Aioli is also used to thicken and finish off a delicious fish stew called Bourride. Take any firm white fish filets and poach in saffron flavored fish stock. Remove the fish filets and keep warm once cooked. Reduce the remaining stock by  $\frac{1}{2}$  so that you have about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup per serving, then add a few tablespoons of aioli until the sauce becomes like a thick cream. Spoon over the fish filets and serve with boiled/steamed potatoes. This dish goes better with a white wine like a pinot grigio or soave.

It is sometimes spread on large croutons and sprinkled with shredded cheese when served with fish soup in France, but traditionally you add copious quantities of paprika to the mixture to add a little heat.

Traditionally all ingredients are pounded in a pestle and mortar and can be thickened with a little bread crumbs at the beginning, but it is much easier to use the food processor, and does not change the flavor.

### Ingredients for traditional Aioli

*6 cloves of garlic peeled*

*2 large egg yolks*

*2 teaspoons Dijon mustard*

*1-1/4 cups extra virgin olive oil*

*2-3 teaspoons white wine vinegar or lemon juice*

*salt and pepper to taste*

1. Process the garlic in a blender or food processor.
2. Add egg yolks and mustard.
3. With the motor running, pour in the olive oil in a slow steady stream.
4. When emulsified, add lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste.

There are a number of variations to this, depending upon taste and concerns.

A. Garlic is very pungent, especially the next day so serve with plenty fresh chopped parley on all dishes. Also you can use  $\frac{1}{2}$  the quantity of elephant garlic that is milder in flavor. Another way to reduce the pungency is to slice and blanch the garlic cloves before processing.

B. You can also substitute extra virgin oil for pure olive oil again to lighten the flavor.

C. Lastly, but not least, instead of using raw eggs, you can use the pasteurized liquid egg substitute. I find it loses something in the flavor, but it is safe from salmonella worries.