

Mark Hix

## **Braised octopus with stewed peppers in red wine**

**Serves 4 as a starter**



This is the simplest, and most delicious, way to cook octopus – it essentially braises itself in the pan.

You can buy a whole fresh octopus from Shellseekers and it's much better value and flavour if you start with fresh and cook it yourself. Over the years, I've tried many methods, including simmering it in a court bouillon broth with herbs and wine. But I've found the simplest and most effective way is to place the octopus in a heavy-bottomed pan with a lid, without adding any liquid, and cook it gently over a low heat. Then, let it cool in the pan. The flavour is just as good, and because of the octopus's dense flesh it releases its own natural juices, effectively braising itself in them.

- 1 fresh or frozen and defrosted octopus (around 2kg)

For the stewed peppers

- 1 red onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
- 2 red Romano peppers, chopped
- 1 tsp paprika
- 100ml red wine
- leaves from a small bunch fresh oregano, marjoram or thyme, finely chopped

Place 1 fresh or frozen and defrosted octopus in a heavy-based saucepan that has a lid, over a medium-high heat. Don't add any liquid.

Once it starts to boil, turn the heat down, pop on the lid and cook over a low heat for about 35 minutes per kilo, turning the octopus a few times to make sure it cooks all over and doesn't stick.

Turn off the heat and leave to cool.

Meanwhile, in a large lidded pan gently cook 1 chopped red onion and 2 sliced garlic cloves in 1 tbsp olive oil. Cook for 4-5 minutes until they begin to soften but not colour.

Stir through 2 chopped red Romano peppers and 1 tsp paprika. Simmer for 2 minutes.

Pour in 100ml red wine and simmer over a low heat for 2-3 minutes more.

Add the finely chopped leaves from a small bunch of oregano, marjoram or thyme, along with the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil.

Season and continue cooking gently with a lid on for about 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally until the peppers and onion are soft.

Remove the octopus from its pan and place on a board. With a sharp knife, remove the tentacles where they meet the body. You will only need four tentacles for this dish so you can freeze the remaining ones along with the body to use for another dish (it's delicious shredded into pasta, risotto or salad).

Spoon the stewed peppers into shallow bowls.

Slice the tentacles into pieces, arrange on top of the peppers and drizzle with a little olive oil to serve.

## **Mark Hix MBE**

**Chef, food writer and advisor**

**Mark Hix is a celebrated chef and award-winning food writer. Our Captain, Darren, met Mark when they were at catering college together in Dorset, and have been friends ever since.**

**Follow him online and social media for more recipes and event updates.**

**Website [markhix.co.uk](http://markhix.co.uk)**

**Instagram [@markhix](https://www.instagram.com/markhix) Substack**

**[@markskitchentable](https://www.substack.com/p/markskitchentable)**



Mark is frequently lauded as one of Britain's most eminent restaurateurs with an unrivalled knowledge of ingredients with provenance. He is an award-winning author and food writer with 12 cookbooks to his name, the latest of which, *Hooked*, regales stories of fishing from his childhood through to the present day. He has an award-winning weekly recipe column in *The Telegraph Magazine*, with previous contributions to print including *City AM*, *GQ*, and *The Independent on Saturday*, for which he was the food writer for 14 years. You'll also find his monthly columns in *Marshwood Vale* and *Dorset Magazine*.

After overseeing top London restaurants *The Ivy*, *Scotts*, *Le Caprice* and *J Sheekey* for 17 years, Mark opened his iconic HIX restaurants which included the likes of *Tramshed*, *Hixter*, *Mark's Bar* and *HIX Oyster & Chop House*, which sadly closed in the pandemic. After closing his last site, *The Oyster & Fish House*, in December of 2024, he is now focussed on his events, writing and advisory roles. He also hosts an array of culinary events including the unique *Mark's Kitchen Table* which takes place at his Charmouth home, as well as taking guests foraging for wild food and fishing off the Dorset coast.