Recipe for Garum

Garum or liquamen is a fermented fish sauce the Romans used to salt their dishes, and as a condiment, similar to products like soy sauce. Fatty fish such as anchovies and mackerel were covered in salt and fermented in the sun for up to three months. The fish below the salt liquefies as a result, and this liquid on top was called garum and was drawn off using a strainer, and herbs added. The remains of the fish were called allec, and were used by the poorer classes.

Households had a shorter method of making garum as the previous method was lengthy, made in factories, and the best garum could be very expensive!

Mark Grant in ‘Roman Cookery: Ancient Recipes in Modern Kitchens’ has provided the below recipe to try at home. You can find this book for sale in the shop.

400g/13oz sea salt
700ml/24 fl oz water
1 jar of salted anchovies (100g/3 ½ oz)
A pinch of dried oregano
1 tbsp reduced red wine (sapa)

Dissolve the salt in the water over a low heat. Add the anchovies to the salted water with the oregano and sapa. Simmer gently for 20 minutes and then leave to cool. Strain the garum through a fine sieve or muslin cloth and store in a jar ready for use.