

Salmon is easy to cook and in many ways too

Salmon is one of the most popularly enjoyed fish. Although some have never enjoyed it in any other way than out of the can!

Fresh salmon is a salt water fish. In the past, the Atlantic salmon had a range that extended from Portugal to Norway and across by Greenland to North America. It used to be extremely difficult to trawl for salmon because no one knew where to find them. However, today, now that the fish have been "found" in spots like off the coast of Greenland, it is possible to trawl. This has caused some controversy though.

Salmon "farming" has developed into big business since the end of the 20th century. The upside to salmon farming is that farmed salmon can be marketed cheaply and the supply is plentiful. The downside to salmon farming is that there are problems of pollution (caused by having huge numbers of fish in a confined space) and problems of quality (fish farmed in inferior operations tend to be fatty, less flavourful and may have problems with parasites and other health hazards).

Fish in general is much easier to cook than most people think. The general rule is 8-10 minutes of cooking per inch of thickness (measure the fish at its thickest part). This applies whether you are grilling, frying, baking or poaching. This also applies regardless of the shape of the fish— whole fish, filets, steaks; it all cooks

What's
cookin'?

Lori and
Gerry Kentner



for the same length of time.

I happen to be a big fan of barbecuing. So I often throw fish on the grill (I spray the grill with non-stick coating first) or wrap a whole fish in foil and put it on the grill.

The challenge is what to do with this fish once it has been cooked. What makes it more exciting than just a piece of fish on your plate? You can serve it plain, with just a wedge of lemon to squeeze on top. You could make a dill sauce or a hollandaise sauce to serve with it. You could put stalks of fresh herbs on top of the coals (fennel is really nice), then put your fish on the grill, then close the lid while cooking. The fish will pick up the flavour and aroma of the smoldering herbs.

Salmon is also wonderful in pasta (as today's recipe shows), and just out of this world when made into Salmon en Croute or Salmon Coulubiak. But we'll have to save those recipes for another day.

Have fun and keep cooking!

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Penne with Salmon and Asparagus

Ingredients

Sauce

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1/2 cup whipping cream (coffee cream)
- 4 tbsp chopped fresh dill (reserve 1 tbsp)
- salt and pepper to taste

Pasta

- 2 cups dried penne pasta
- 1 salmon filet, 8 oz, (skin removed), sliced into strips
- 1/2 bunch fresh asparagus
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Method

1. In a saucepan over low heat, melt butter. Sprinkle flour over melted butter and whisk it together. DO NOT BURN it! If necessary, remove it from the heat. Slowly add the wine and whisk it into the flour/butter mixture. Slowly add vegetable stock and whisk it into the mixture. Continue the whisking until the mixture comes to a boil. Once it is boiling, turn heat down very low.

2. Slowly whisk the cream into the mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add 3 tbsp chopped dill (save the other tbsp). Set the sauce aside.

3. Cook the penne, then drain and rinse under cold water. Set penne aside.

4. Snap flat ends off the asparagus. Cut each stem diagonally into three or four pieces. Place in a shallow pan with a bit of cold water and cover. Bring water to a boil and steam the asparagus— only for a minute or two. The asparagus should be very firm, just not hard. Remove asparagus from pan and run under cold water. Drain and set aside.

5. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan. Add the strips of salmon and stir gently so as not to break the salmon too much. When salmon is changing to a pink colour, add the asparagus, sauce and cooked penne pasta. Continue to stir gently until all the ingredients are combined and hot.

6. Serve immediately, using the 1 reserved tbsp of chopped fresh dill as garnish.

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