

# good fish

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BECKY SELENGUT

# good fish



Sustainable Seafood Recipes  
from the Pacific Coast

*Foreword by Brad Matsen*

*Wine pairings by April Pogue*

*Photography by Clare Barboza*



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# Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)  
[Dedication](#)  
[Acknowledgements](#)  
[Epigraph](#)  
[Foreword](#)  
[Introduction](#)  
[how to use this book](#)  
[sustainable seafood basics](#)

## [SHELLFISH](#)

[clams](#)  
[mussels](#)  
[oysters](#)  
[dungeness crab](#)  
[shrimp](#)  
[scallops](#)

## [FINFISH](#)

[wild salmon](#)  
[pacific halibut](#)  
[black cod](#)  
[rainbow trout](#)  
[albacore tuna](#)  
[arctic char](#)

## [LITTLE FISH & EGGS](#)

[sardines](#)  
[squid](#)  
[sustainable caviar](#)

[appendix a: a note on eating raw seafood](#)  
[appendix b: fish with the highest levels of mercury and pops](#)  
[sustainable seafood resources](#)  
[index](#)  
[about the author](#)  
[Copyright Page](#)

to dad





# acknowledgments

To my army of recipe testers, tasters, advisors, and friends, I bow deeply upon one knee: Carrie Kincaid, Heather Diller, Heather Weiner, Becky Ginn, Kim Allen, Maxine Williams, Elaine Hackett, Marc Schermerhorn, David Wiley, Lorna Yee, Henry Lo, Derek Slager, Chris Nishiwaki, Larry Liang, Kristen Ramer Liang, Hans Giner, Catherine Moon Giner, Elaine Mowery, Gordon King, Ann Berman, Shannon and Jason Mullett-Bowlsby, Michael Anderson, Shirley Abreu, Jenise Silva, Matthew Amster-Burton, John Tippet, Allison Day, Gregory Heller, Erika Garcia, Judy Niver, “Oyster Bill” Whitlock, everyone at Mutual Fish, Nancy Harvey, Shauna James Ahern, Dan Ahern, Amy Duchene, Sue Skillman, Ryan Breske, Hsiao-Ching Chou, Rebekah Denn, Nancy Leson, Jan Martin, Emily Wines, Jake Kosseff, Doug Derham, Miki Tamura, Mona Memmer, Janis Fultor, Therese Ogle, Mimi Southwood, Ba Culbert and the staff at Tilikum Place Café, Susan Actor, Lis Fisher, Caro Horsfall, Lara Muffley, Melissa Poe, J. Christian Andrilla, Langdon Cook, Rocky Yel, and the “Food Whores.” A big sloppy kiss to Denise Anderson, the queen of recipe testers.

Elizabeth Wales—thank you for sharing your expertise with me, above and beyond that of a good neighbor.

Jill Lightner of *Edible Seattle*, Jackie DeCicco of PCC Cooks, and Giselle Smith of *Seattle Homes and Lifestyles*—each of you makes me a better writer every time I work with you, and I greatly appreciate how supportive you are of my passion for all things seafood (and an occasional missed deadline or five).

They may not be aware of their membership, but the following people are all on my Seafood Advisory Committee; they are fishermen and renowned experts in their fields who have graciously donated their time to advise me on issues of seafood sustainability. Thank you to Jeremy Brown and Rich Childers for your expert review, and to Nick Furman of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission. My eternal appreciation to Casson Trenor for your knowledge, passion, love of sushi, and quick pickup on the phone whenever I needed you; Jon Rowley, for inspiring me with all your love and appreciation for the inherent deliciousness of life; Rick Moonen, for being one of the most colorful advocates for the oceans I’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting—and an incredible chef, to boot; Hajime Sato, for following your heart and taking the huge risk of changing your business in favor of sustainable sushi; Jacqueline Church, for your support and long-standing commitment to sustainable seafood; and Marco Pinchot, for giving so freely of your time and knowledge in guiding our little rat pack on your shellfish-farming tours. Amy Grondin, many thanks for being my go-to fish expert and sustainable seafood compadre for the last four years: you are a generous, knowledge-seeking, fish-lovin’ woman; you are the salt of the ocean and have been hugely helpful in getting my facts right for this book.

Amy Pennington, thank you for introducing me to Susan Roxborough, my editor extraordinaire at Sasquatch Books, who brought this idea to my door, appreciated my voice in all its snark (well, maybe not all), and took a chance on giving me so many pages. Thanks to all the folks at Sasquatch, specifically publisher Gary Luke, Rachelle Longé (production editor goddess!), Diane Sepansk (copy editor goddess!), Anna Goldstein (designer goddess!), and Lisa Gordanier (proofreader goddess!).

Clare Barboza, working with you has been like finding a missing limb that looks remarkably like a camera that takes both the shots I imagine in my head but can't produce, and the shots I never had the vision to see in the first place.

Jerry Traunfeld, I consider you my mentor, and it seems fitting that most of this book was written at your restaurant, Poppy, while sitting at the bar drinking a Papi Delicious, tapping away at my computer, and eating some of the most extraordinarily prepared seafood dishes on the Pacific Coast. Thanks to all your staff at Poppy for taking such great care of me and April.

Jeanette Smith and Ashlyn Forshner, my wing(wo)men, you two deserve a week's stay in a spa (yes, I'll rub your feet) for all the help and heart you contributed to this book—it wouldn't be half of what it is without your creativity, humor, and gentle guidance. Food adventures would not be the same without you both.

Mark Malamud, Susan Hautala, and Jasper Malamud, you are my patrons, friends, family, clients, and guinea pigs—your kitchen has been my test kitchen for ten years and counting. This book is as much yours as it is mine.

Some food-and-wine pairings are so sublime that the food makes an already good wine sing, and the wine makes an enjoyable dish unforgettable—and that is precisely how I think of my partnership with April Pogue. Sharing a life of food and wine with April makes everything better.

“We can eat in ways that are good for us AND good for the planet. Instead of feeding our desire for tomatoes 365 days per year, we’ve rediscovered the joy of summer heirlooms. We’re reminded again and again that forcing natural processes into unnatural production has consequences beyond dulling our senses to seasonality. These lessons apply as much to fishing as they do farming. Fish are seasonal, and increasingly, farmed. We can and should enjoy them, in season, responsibly raised or sustainably caught.”

—*Jacqueline Church, food writer and sustainable food advocate*









# foreword

“One of the great dreams of man must be to find some place between the extremes of nature and civilization where it is possible to live without regret.”

—Barry Lopez

Twenty-five years ago, a heartbeat in human evolution, we figured out that the sea is not an inexhaustible source of food. Until then, the notion of infinite fish, clams, scallops, oysters, krill, shrimp, and the rest of the ocean banquet was a serviceable fiction that contained a lot of comfort. When I was a kid in the 1950s, the *Weekly Reader* I got in school told me that scientists had determined we could take a billion tons of seafood a year. Mercifully, Thomas Robert Malthus’s dreadful calculations that the human population would soon outrun the food supply were wrong. The sea would save us. Whew. By the mid-1970s, slightly better science revised that estimate to about five hundred million tons. Still, no problem at dinnertime. Since most people are no more able to live comfortably with the certain specter of global famine than they are with a firm date for a killer asteroid, those predictions gave us welcome relief. We continued to develop our wide-open fisheries at a breakneck pace. In 1989, though, a couple of decades of careful record-keeping revealed that no matter how many fishermen or how much horsepower we sent to sea, the sustainable yield of food would not be more than a hundred million tons. To that point, fishing and all our interactions with seafood were founded upon the assumption of endless supply, a paradigm that created an economic system dependent on constant development. For a few years after the facts banished the fiction of infinite seafood, we simply blamed the fishermen. Overfishing surely diminished the productive power of the sea and its creatures, but heaping the burden of responsibility on them did not fundamentally alter the calculus of finite seafood and human survival. Finally, we got it. Becky Selengut’s wonderful compendium of sustainable seafood recipes, *Good Fish*, is informed by an indelible truth: we are personally accountable for what we eat. She has taken her inspiration from the acceptance of individual responsibility that finally occurred to us in the early 1990s and continues to build twenty years later. Every one of us should strive to know the home address of the seafood we eat. We should know whether its living relatives are in danger of vanishing forever. We should explore the complexities of eating wild or farmed seafood. Becky has blended the urgency of those demands with exquisite recipes that resonate with her own willingness to embrace the realities of our dependence on the ocean for survival. Last night, when I took my first bite of her seared albacore with ratatouille and caramelized figs, I knew that the fish was line-caught in the Pacific, where albacore are not depleted as they are in the Atlantic. I knew that it was a “Best Choice” on the seafood watch lists of the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Marine Stewardship Council. I knew it was delicious.

—Brad Matsen  
Port Townsend, Washington

# introduction

I might as well have grown up with pickled herring in my baby bottle. I was weaned just as soon as I could drop my dime-store fishing pole in the big lake that was our backyard. My first real job was down the street at a seafood market in northwest New Jersey, on the shores of Lake Hopatcong. Or weekends you'd find me selling crab-stuffed flounder rolls to bridge-and-tunnel businessmen and nice ladies from the neighborhood.

I eventually moved out west. While attending culinary school in Seattle, I stared in awe at a massive halibut's eyes, contemplating their migration from the sides of its head to the top. Two tours through Italian restaurants introduced me to the diversity of regional fish dishes. At one place I worked with tuna roe (*bottarga*), and I soaked salt cod for fritters. Lots and lots of salt cod. At the other I grilled little silver fish while the Italian owner waxed poetic about the best fish in the world (Grilled! From the Mediterranean! Salt! Olive oil! *Eccellente!*).

My most formative restaurant experience was cooking at the famous Herbfarm Restaurant in Woodinville, Washington. I was the fish girl there: I held still-quivering abalone in my hands, shucked the tiniest native Olympia oysters, faced more Dungeness crabs—antennae to eye—than I care to count, and scooped out luscious golden eggs from spiny sea urchins while wearing thick rubber gloves for self-defense. There I cradled in my arms, just barely, the stunning majesty of a forty-pound wild Alaska king salmon, as you would a precious baby, and I chuckled alongside my fellow line cooks at the phallic ridiculousness of a geoduck. I was miles and miles from the Atlantic Coast.

With the spirit of a local, I ran the galley of a boat headed up the Inside Passage to Alaska, peeling spot prawns and filleting salmon before climbing down the ladder to my quarters, each step pulling a bit more of the New Jersey out of the girl. This past winter I shed any remaining vestiges of my birthplace. I joined dozens of others on a traditional night dig for razor clams. There were cars lined up as far as the eye could see, their headlights like luminaria leading the way up the coast. When I got my limit and headed back to the cabin, I remember feeling that I had finally gone completely native.

The world of seafood is much more complicated now than it was when I pulled my first Jersey sunfish out of the lake; shortsighted economic gain, a morass of bureaucracy, and a universe of misinformation complicate it. It's clear that we have an insatiable appetite for far more than the oceans, rivers, and lakes can provide. Guilt and food are a terrible combination, certain to give you indigestion, or as my friend says, "Guilt makes for bad gravy." Denial or ignorance about the consequences of our food choices is far too widespread. Most insidious is the attitude that we might as well indulge in all types of fish while they are still around (because who knows when they might disappear).

My intention with this book is to help simplify some very complicated issues, thereby empowering you to make better, more sustainable seafood choices. There are some generally recognized sustainable seafood choices that have been vetted by the highly regarded Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program, among others. Many factors are considered to determine which fisheries are sustainable, including, for example, the type of gear used to harvest the fish, the relative abundance of the species, the amount of accidental bycatch of non-target species, and the safety of the waters from

which the fish are harvested.

This cookbook celebrates seafood from up and down the western coast of the United States: seafood that is well managed, and fished or farmed in such a way as to protect the environment. In this book you will find recipes for seafood that is low in mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), seafood that is healthful and absolutely delicious. I hope that the good management of these excellent choices and the hard work of those who educate us about making wise purchasing decisions will help keep all of these species around for a very long time.

There is a story evolving here, and the plot hinges on the health of our oceans and the sustainability of our fish. You, the consumer, are the protagonist. The most important thing you can do is ask questions. With each type of seafood I cover, I pose questions you might ask your fishmongers in order to be sure you are purchasing seafood that is healthy for you and your family as well as for our oceans. If you are satisfied with the answers, support those fishmongers. Tell your friends about them. Encourage them to continue doing the right thing by giving them your business.

Forgive me the double negative, but this book isn't about what you *shouldn't* do. It's a celebration of what you *can* do. Eat these fish with joy, share these recipes with your favorite people, and know that you are actively doing your part to ensure that seafood survives—and perhaps someday soon, thrives again.



# how to use this book

This book is divided into sections based on three broad categories of seafood: shellfish (clams, mussels, oysters, Dungeness crab, shrimp, and scallops), finfish (salmon, halibut, black cod, trout, albacore tuna, and arctic char), and little-fish and eggs (sardines, squid, and caviar).

My goal is to help you feel comfortable and confident purchasing these fifteen types of sustainable seafood from your local fishmonger, fisherman, or seafood counter. Look for the following information at the beginning of each chapter:

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE** Before asking you to wield your very influential buying power, I want to make sure I've given you the most current information about why I've included these particular species.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Seafood naming can be very confusing: one person's black cod is another person's sablefish. This is the section where I list all the names you might see for the type of seafood you are purchasing. Keep in mind that the best way to identify a fish is to ask what the exact species is, which is why I have included Latin names.

**SEASON:** Just like produce, most types of seafood have a season; it is worth knowing so you can get the freshest quality at the right time of year. That said, well-handled frozen seafood can often be of equal or better quality than fresh. For more information, see *Fresh Versus Frozen* on page xxvii.

**BUYING TIPS:** Here is where you'll find out all the things chefs do to scope out freshness and quality in seafood.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET** There is only so much you can see with your eyes, smell with your nose, and touch with your fingertips (before getting caught). To get all the information you want, you should have a conversation with your fishmonger or fisherman. This is a great way to find out how much or how little the person selling the seafood knows about the product. This is also the time to inquire about its origin—there is a big difference between domestic farmed shrimp and imported shrimp, for example. The more you know, the easier it will be to decide if this is the seafood you want to purchase.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** After reading all about how to select the freshest seafood, you'll want to know how best to store it. Shellfish, finfish, little-fish, and fish eggs all have different needs. This is the section where you'll learn how to keep your seafood as fresh as possible.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** It's incredible how often we eat things without having any idea of how they came to be. This is especially true for farmed seafood. Look to this section to learn, for example, how a mussel can be farmed or how sustainable albacore is caught.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** There will be times when you head out shopping with a recipe in hand looking for a specific type of seafood. It's helpful to know ahead of time what some good substitutes are in case you can't find what you're looking for, or if the quality doesn't pass muster. Remember these "Good FISH" rules—F: Farmed can be OK (verify that it is done responsibly). I: Investigate your source (ask questions; support good chefs, fishmongers, and markets). S: Smaller is better (limit portion size; eat smaller fish, like sardines and young albacore). H: Home (buy Pacific Coast fish because the United States has higher environmental standards).

## RECIPES

For each of the fifteen types of seafood, there are five recipes, organized from simplest to most challenging.

**EASY RECIPES:** The first two recipes are designed for a beginner who is eager to learn how to cook with seafood but may be intimidated by it, or the home cook who wants a recipe that can be prepared in thirty minutes or less on a weeknight. I'm a cooking teacher by profession, and I love helping novice cooks (especially intimidated novice cooks) learn how to work with seafood. In these recipes, I will gently hold your hand throughout the cooking process and hopefully anticipate any questions you might have. I tell this to all my students, but it's especially important for inexperienced cooks: make sure to read the recipe through at least twice before starting. Pay special attention to the Ingredients and Terms Defined (page xxii), Tools of the Trade (page xxiv), and Fresh Versus Frozen (page xxvii) sections as well as the Anatomy of a Flake (page 102) box. Also be sure to check out the links for online cooking videos (see How-To Videos, opposite), especially if you are a visual learner like I am.

**INTERMEDIATE RECIPES:** The next two recipes are written for a more experienced home cook; these recipes can be prepared in under an hour. These medium-level recipes also expose you to less familiar species (geoduck) and ingredients (shiso, kombu, hijiki), and they may require some special equipment (a wok or ice cream machine) and advanced prep time (presalting or marinating fish).

**ADVANCED RECIPES:** The last recipe of the five is designed for the adventurous and involved cook, perhaps a self-described "weekend warrior"—someone who is happy spending several hours in the kitchen and likes a challenge. It is also meant to appeal to my fellow chefs out there who want to flip directly to recipes that involve more advanced techniques such as fish smoking, pasta making, curing, or working with multiple steps, components, and/or garnishes.

**WINE PAIRINGS:** Wine pairings are selected by my partner in life, work, and sometimes crime, the lovely (no bias here) and talented sommelier April Pogue. April has worked at some of the finest restaurants on the West Coast: Fifth Floor in San Francisco, Spago Beverly Hills, and in Seattle at Earth & Ocean (in the W Hotel), Yarrow Bay Grill, and Wild Ginger.

## HOW-TO VIDEOS

Scattered throughout the book are links to short, fun how-to videos (denoted with the symbol ‡) in which I show you how to perform some techniques that are hard to capture in words. Check out [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com), where you'll see the following:

- *How to select quality sea food*
- *How to clean a geoduck*
- *How to debeard, clean, and store mussels*
- *How to shuck an oyster*
- *How to cook and clean a Dungeness crab*
- *How to devein shrimp*
- *How to sear a scallop*
- *How to remove the skin from a fish fillet*
- *How to remove pin bones from salmon, trout, or char*
- *How to fillet a fish*
- *How to wok-smoke fish*
- *How to debone a whole trout for stuffing*
- *How to butterfly and debone a sardine*
- *How to clean and cut up a whole squid*
- *How to make a quenelle with caviar*

April first gives you her ideal pairing—a varietal she hopes you'll be able to find at your local wine shop—listing a specific bottle she tasted with the dish and declared to be a great match. If you aren't able to find her first choice, she offers a secondary varietal as a good alternative. From time to time I butt my nose in and offer you a booze or beer pairing.

## INGREDIENTS AND TERMS DEFINED

**CLAM JUICE:** If you don't have extra seafood stock stored in your freezer, bottled or canned clam juice makes a flavorful stock. Be sure to season your recipe cautiously as different brands can vary in saltiness.

**DICING:** *Small dice:* Technically—as in “culinary school instructor walking around class with a ruler”—this is defined as ¼ inch by ¼ inch by ¼ inch, but just use that as a very rough guide. *Medium*

*dice:* ½ inch by ½ inch by ½ inch. *Large dice:* ¾ inch by ¾ inch by ¾ inch.

**DRY WHITE VERMOUTH**We're mostly red wine drinkers in my house, and I used to feel guilty cooking with white wine and then later realizing it had gone bad before we remembered to drink it. Dry white vermouth has a long shelf life and tastes delicious when used as a cooking wine—after all, it's a fortified white wine infused with herbs and spices. (I thank my friend Susan for teaching me this handy tip.)

**FISH SAUCE:**Fish sauce can be found in the Asian foods aisle of large supermarkets. It's made from fermented anchovies or shrimp and is one of those very special ingredients that adds an incredible salty-savory flavor to foods. One wonders who the first person was to taste the fermented juices of rotting anchovies and declare it a delicious seasoning, but incredibly, they were right. Fish sauce on its own is pungent; in a dish it is magical. I've used many brands throughout the years with good results, but Tiparos and Squid Brand are high quality, and I usually have both on hand. There's no need to refrigerate fish sauce: it's already rotten!

**HIGH-HEAT VEGETABLE OIL**A lot of folks don't know that each type of oil has a different point at which it will start smoking/burning (called the smoke point) and that smoking oils can be carcinogenic. I like to teach people to use the right oil for the job. When I specify using a high-heat vegetable oil for sautéing, pan-frying, or stir-frying, use any of the following oils: peanut, safflower, sunflower, coconut, or grapeseed. You can also fry with clarified butter (ghee). Look for expeller-pressed oils that are mechanically, not chemically, refined.

**JERSEY GIRL:** See Introduction (page xvii). Exit 28, in case you're wondering.

**LEMON JUICE:** Always fresh squeezed, pretty please.

**MIRIN:** Mirin is a sweet rice wine that can be found in the Asian foods aisle of most large supermarkets. Substitute with two parts sake to one part sugar, or in a pinch, two parts dry white wine to one part sugar.

**PACIFIC COAST:**For the purposes of this book, I've selected seafood that is either native to or farmed from California up the coast through Canada and into Alaska.

**PANKO:** Panko is a flaked Japanese bread crumb that is becoming more and more popular as a substitute for old-fashioned bread crumbs. I really like the texture it lends to pan-fried foods, especially oysters or fried fillets—it seems to give the food an extra lightness and crunchiness. I know it has hit the mainstream because out on Washington's Long Beach Peninsula—which is razor-clamming territory—I saw it being sold in a large bulk bin at the local supermarket/hardware store.

**SAKE:** Sake can now be found at most large supermarkets where wine is sold; you can substitute Chinese rice wine.

**SALT:** For the purposes of this book, unless otherwise specified, assume sea salt. If you prefer to use kosher salt, double the amount (kosher salt takes up more volume with its larger crystals), but as always, season to taste. If you're using Morton iodized salt, I have no comment. No, that's not true, I do have a comment: Have you tasted it recently? On its own? It tastes terrible!

**SEASONED RICE WINE VINEGAR:** use this ingredient a lot throughout the book. This is a convenience product made of rice vinegar that has some salt and sugar in it. If you have plain rice wine vinegar, just lightly heat it and dissolve some salt and sugar in it to taste. Seasoned rice wine vinegar makes the simplest dressing ever: just toss it with cucumbers, carrots, sesame seeds, etcetera—no oil necessary.

**SHISO:** Shiso (also known as *perilla*) is sometimes called Japanese mint. You can find it at Japanese or Asian markets. Substitute with spearmint.

**TAMARIND:** Tamarind is sold in several forms: dried in the pod (in the produce section of some stores, especially Mexican markets); as a paste, with or without seeds; and as a thin concentrate. To remove seeds and sticky pulp, rehydrate the paste or pod innards in a small amount of hot water, then push the tamarind through a sieve. For use in recipes, one teaspoon paste is the equivalent of one tablespoon concentrate. Tamarind—in one form or another—is becoming very easy to find these days, but if you're having difficulty, lemon juice works fine in a pinch.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**CAST-IRON SKILLET:** I love cast iron so much, I wrote a dorky poem about it.

### ODE TO A CAST-IRON SKILLET

*Carry that weight and think of your foremothers  
Who never needed gym memberships—if they  
could even imagine them.*

*Heave that iron and fight osteoporosis; your skillet  
is a healer, a weapon, and a tool.*

*Only in modern times could we cast aside cast iron  
In favor of flimsy fry pans with deeply etched scars.  
Heft that pan! Sear that scallop! Bake that cornbread!*

*Carry that weight and think of your foremothers  
Who never had those little flaps of skin under their arms.*

**FILLETING KNIFE (1 AND 8):** Your knife need not be expensive or fancy, but it should be ever so slightly flexible to help you maneuver around delicate, curved rib bones. I think one in the range of seven inches is good for working with both small and larger fish. I like to use a larger knife (1), sometimes called a scimitar knife, to fillet whole salmon or albacore.

**FISH SCALER (3):** Like pin boning, fish scaling is a job that fishmongers are happy to do for you, and for many reasons, you should be happy they are happy to do it. It's a messy job, and I know from experience that despite submerging the fish in a sink of cold water (highly encouraged), those scales tend to go everywhere, including onto your skin, where they become one with you. However, you might find yourself needing to scale a fish that was caught by someone you know, in which case this nifty tool will come in handy. Place the fish in a sink of cold water, wear an apron, and then run this tool from tail to head, grabbing and pulling off the scales. You can use a spoon if you don't have a fish scaler handy (not as effective, but still workable).

**FISH SPATULA (7):** Sometimes it all comes down to the right tool—and a fish spatula, with its thin, metal, slightly upturned edge, really helps gently flip or transfer a delicate fillet or whole fish.





**FISH TWEEZERS (6)** Fishmongers are usually happy to remove pin bones from salmon, trout, or char if you ask nicely, but sometimes they don't take enough care and can snap them in half or tear the



flesh. The pin bones that run through a salmon or trout fillet can be brittle, and it takes some finesse to remove them (go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) to watch me demonstrate the technique). If you decide you want to try it yourself, you'll need a pair of fish tweezers. In a pinch, I've used clean needle-nose pliers (5) or even kitchen tongs to remove pin bones.

**LABRADOR RETRIEVER** Feel free to substitute another breed or any mutt. Nothing is more effective at cleaning a kitchen floor than a dog. Ours is a canine Zamboni, efficiently wet-mopping our floor with her tongue just as soon as we say the word.

**OYSTER SHUCKER (4)** I've seen cooks and deckhands, fishermen and drunks open oysters with all manner of things: knives, screwdrivers, a hammer and nail, and keys. Just because it can be done doesn't mean it *should* be done, especially if you are a beginner. Whether your shucker is blunt or sharp is a personal choice, though I recommend blunt if you are a novice. Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to shuck oysters.

**SCRUB BRUSH (2)** A solid, stiff brush will come in handy when I suggest scrubbing off the little barnacle bits that have jumped on board your oyster shell, or the fibrous strands of algae and whatnot on your mussels. Wild clams, too, can use a good scrubbing.

**SPICE GRINDER** Also known as a coffee grinder, but don't make the mistake of using your dedicated coffee grinder for grinding spices unless the sound of cumin- or turmeric-infused coffee appeals to you. I keep a separate grinder just for spices. I also put a piece of blue painter's tape around the outside with the word "spices" scrawled on it so April doesn't sleepily confuse it with the coffee grinder.

I find a spice grinder to be an indispensable kitchen tool. You know those fancy, expensive spice blends that all the chefs are marketing these days? Some fresh spices plus a spice grinder plus two minutes is all that keeps you from creating your own fresh blends with which to dress that gorgeous piece of fish before throwing it on the grill. I provide several recipes for spice blends that will get you started.



# sustainable seafood basics

## FRESH VERSUS FROZEN

Ah, that age-old question for which too many have a knee-jerk answer: “Oh,” they say, “I only buy my fish fresh, never frozen!”

Not all fresh fish are the same, and you may be shocked to know that “fresh” does not have any legally defined meaning. A fish that has never been frozen but is eleven days past harvest, was poorly handled, and is in questionable condition can still be marketed and sold as fresh. Alternatively, a well-handled fresh fish (and by “well-handled” I mean landed gently, bled, and quickly chilled) has a longer shelf life, and its quality can be maintained for many days out of the water. A quality fresh fish will have its scales intact and will smell good; its flesh will be firm enough that a touch to its skin will not leave an impression. (Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to select quality seafood.)

Not all frozen fish are the same. Again, it comes down to the handling. A well-handled fish prior to freezing makes all the difference in the world. Many fish are frozen right at sea and can be extremely high quality. Alternatively, if a fish is banged around and not chilled down quickly enough, the frozen product will

suffer: the telltale signs will be water loss, gaping, and tearing. Home freezers are not designed to freeze fish well, but, that said, I’ve had success with really good, well-handled albacore tuna loins I’ve vacuum-sealed them, frozen them, and then used them within two months.



## HOW TO SAFELY THAW FROZEN FISH

The best way to thaw a frozen piece of fish is to leave it overnight in the fridge. If you are in a pinch and need it quickly, put the fillet in a resealable plastic bag inside a large metal bowl filled with cold water. Replace the water with fresh cold water every half hour, until the fillet is thawed. Why not use warm water to speed up the process? Two reasons: 1. Warm water—depending on how warm—could actually start to cook the delicate fillet. 2. Thawing is safest out of the “danger zone,” which is 40° to 140°F. Thawing with warm water would put the fish in perfect bacterial heaven: great for the bacteria, not so much for you. Keep it cold.

## A PROPERLY FROZEN FISH

Sustainable seafood educator Amy Grondin (also a commercial fisherman) helped simplify for me the

commercial freezing process that brings high-quality frozen fish to our markets. I'll let her explain in her own words:

“To maintain the quality of fish as a frozen product, fish must be frozen to below 0°F/−18°C as quickly as possible. Fish tissue can contain up to 80 percent water and has little connective tissue to hold the cells together. When water freezes, it expands. If the freezing happens quickly, the ice crystals formed in the fish are small and cause minimal change to the cell structure of the flesh. When the fish is slowly defrosted in a refrigerator in a drip pan, the result is a firm piece of fish.

“Freezing fish slowly makes big ice crystals that break the connective tissue and cell walls of the fish. The fish will be mushy when it is defrosted. Think of the bottle you accidentally left in the freezer when attempting a quick chill. The same thing happens to the fish flesh when you try to freeze it at home.

“The freezers used on fishing boats and by processors are not the same as a domestic freezer, which is designed to hold frozen products, not create them. Industrial freezers use blast units and other techniques that freeze fish quickly, bringing the fish through the critical temperature zone between 32°F/0°C and 0°F/−18°C where cell damage can occur.”

If you don't live near a local source of fish, there is a carbon-footprint benefit to purchasing your fish frozen. Fresh fish needs to be flown all over the world, consuming huge quantities of jet fuel in order to get to you, whereas frozen fish can be delivered via more fuel-efficient means, such as ship, rail, or truck.

## FARMED VERSUS WILD

Which is better? I'd like to tell you that there is a very simple answer to this question, but the fact remains that the answer is: it depends. Half the people I talk to assume that farmed fish is bad and wild is good. The other half think we need to stop eating all wild fish to give them a break and eat only farmed fish. My goal here is to simplify the issue as much as humanly possible without glossing over some important points. That's a hard task, but work with me through this overview.

### *Wild Fish*

Many species of wild fish are doing quite well. Their fisheries are well managed, which means that the catch is highly regulated, preserving fish for future generations. Furthermore, the environment is not destroyed in the process of catching these fish. Pacific Coast albacore and the five species of Alaska wild salmon come to mind. Pacific Coast squid don't seem to be threatened. Ditto for wild sardines.

What's important to keep in mind when purchasing wild fish is how they were caught. The most environmentally sound way to catch fish is in small, focused quantities. Examples include “trolling”—also known as “hook and line”—which is essentially the commercial version of dipping a fishing pole into the ocean; catching shrimp or crabs in a pot; and small-scale purse seining (using a

net to enclose a school of fish).

Other methods are not as ocean- and fish-friendly. Two big ones I try to avoid are fish caught by dredging/trawling (which, unfortunately, sounds very similar to “trolling”) and certain kinds of long-lining. Trawling scrapes the ocean floor by dragging heavy weighted nets, which is especially bad if there is sensitive habitat there (very often the case). Trawling also produces a lot of “bycatch.” Bycatch consists of nontargeted, accidentally caught species, which are often unintentionally killed in the fishing process. Not only is this a complete waste of protein, if the bycatch includes juvenile fish killed before they can spawn, it upsets the life cycle of the species. Bycatch is bad all around, and it’s crucial that commercial fisheries limit it as much as possible.

Long-lining involves dragging lots of lines, armed with many hooks that drop down at regular intervals, often for miles on end. It is most problematic when fisheries use it to catch fish in the top part of the ocean column, because the line sits on the surface, and all sorts of unintended species get hooked (turtles, birds, etc.). After so much time on the line, many of these animals are dead when it is finally hauled in. Bycatch, therefore, is also a rampant problem with this type of fishing. Luckily, not all long-lining is the same, and there are major exceptions: long-lining along the bottom of the ocean—for example, in Alaska’s sustainable halibut and black cod fisheries—has a much better track record of catching only intended species.

***The important questions to ask*** when buying wild fish are: what is the species, where was it caught, and how was it caught? If you want Pacific Coast wild seafood, you can feel good picking the types I specify in this book, though keep in mind that this is a constantly evolving story—which makes a resource like Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch indispensable (see page 239 for contact information).

## ***Farmed Fish***

Let’s clear up a common misconception: while there can be some issues with shellfish farming (obstructed access to beaches, complaints of unsightliness, litter), in general it is extremely sustainable for two very important reasons. First, farmed shellfish are not fed using wild fish feed, so there is no negative drawing of species (protein loss) from the oceans to convert to feed. Second, farmed shellfish, just like wild shellfish, filter feed, thus contributing to better water quality. There are few simple decisions when it comes to eating seafood ethically, but here is one: shellfish such as oysters, clams, and mussels make the oceans cleaner. Three cheers for these little pumping filter feeders!

Let’s move on to fish farming. On the Pacific Coast we’re mainly talking about salmon farms, which are located right on the ocean’s shores (versus on land in a closed-containment system). This method of farming carries with it huge problems. Studies are finding that ocean farming hurts wild fish. Think of it this way: if there were an outbreak of disease on an island where there were no ferries or bridges, the disease would be self-limiting. Compare this to a disease breaking out in the middle of New York City—pretty limitless how far that disease could spread, right? It just seems like a bad idea to mix and mingle high-density fish farms right in the middle of wild-fish ocean migration routes. The ocean is an extremely efficient distribution medium; we need to be very careful about what we

introduce into this vast open system. Closed-containment land-based farms make a lot more sense. Other issues worth considering when thinking about fish farming are feed ratio and quality of feed. Carnivorous fish at the top of the food chain require a lot of wild fish feed to convert to usable protein. (For example, farmed bluefin tuna are said to have a feed ratio of anywhere from 5:1 all the way up to 20:1—depending on how big the fish and which study you’re looking at—where the first number is pounds of wild feed to produce the second number, pounds of fish flesh.) It is much more sustainable to choose fish lower on the food chain that are either vegetarian or require small amounts of fish protein to produce their flesh. Another issue worth exploring is the quality of the feed given to farmed fish. I’m interested in the sustainability of our oceans but also in the health of the fish for those who consume it. Farmed fish may be a renewable resource, but if that fish is fed genetically modified grains treated with chemicals, I can’t, in good conscience, get behind it. This is an area that needs more investigation; consumer pressure will help get to the bottom of these issues.

## LESS IS MORE

We humans eat too much fish.

We humans eat too much of the same kinds of fish.

Farmed salmon, imported farmed shrimp, and wild fish, such as bluefin tuna, are in such high demand that they are produced or harvested in staggering, unbelievable numbers. In the case of offshore farming, the fish are packed into cages like sardines in a can, escape into wild populations, spread disease, and create all sorts of problems for our environment. Antibiotics are applied en masse by many offshore farming operations to control outbreaks of disease; unfortunately, those diseases, not to mention the antibiotics, still find a way to get into our oceans. In the case of bluefin tuna (and other wild species), we are simply fishing them into extinction.

We humans have forgotten that fish have a season, just like produce. We have forgotten that there is a cost associated with getting what we want whenever we want it. Generally speaking, industrial fishing operations have become too damn good at catching wild fish—at any cost—and too greedy and shortsighted when it comes to farming them. At this rate, we will eat all the wild fish and destroy the environment farming finfish in offshore farms. An industrial model of fishing, just like farming or meat production, is incredibly efficient on the one hand and incredibly destructive on the other. Closed-containment land-based fish farming (versus offshore open-net farming), shellfish farming, and a local fishery model hold the potential to address some of our biggest concerns, although these systems are not perfect. At this point, though, perfect should not be the enemy of good.

## THREE CHOICES CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

1. ***Diversify the kinds of fish you eat.*** There are five species of salmon, not just king and sockeye. Little silver fish such as sardines and anchovies are delicious, nutritious, and affordable.
2. ***Be selective with your seafood purchases.*** We have a lot of power as consumers. Pull out your wallet only when you are comfortable that the fish you have selected is both healthy for

you and for the planet. You deserve to eat high-quality fish. Future generations also deserve to have what you have.

3. ***Limit the amount of seafood on your plate.*** I've written my recipes to reflect my desire to rearrange the priorities on our plates. Generally speaking,  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of seafood per person is affordable and reasonable (for shellfish I recommend about  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound per person to account for the weight of the shells). Most of my recipes are based on a meal for four, so I recommend buying 1 pound of quality sustainable seafood. It's budget friendly and planet friendly. We're all supposed to be eating more vegetables anyway, so let this cookbook give you a gentle push in that direction. Less is more.

We humans need to think about fish and fishermen the way we have started to think about produce and farmers: the closer you are to your food source, the better your ability to know what you are eating.



# SHELLFISH









**clams**



**New Jersey: August 1978.** I can still smell the scent of hundreds of clams splitting themselves open in our speckled and spigoted black-and-white steamer pot. Our family lived in three houses on the lake, separated by one mile and the time it took for short legs to traverse the distance. Each house presented a different snack opportunity, with my aunt and uncle's place being the dinnertime final destination. On late summer days we would gather there, sunburned and boat-weary, and circle a large pot, filled to the rim with more clams than we believed the pot should hold.

These clams were my very first taste of shellfish, and it's true what they say: you always remember your first. Their bounce-back brininess—their sweetness and salinity—formed the centerpiece of so many of our summers. Clams, shared with my boisterous and loving family, etched themselves firmly onto my culinary map. They were my proverbial first dip of the toe into the ocean. I was hooked early, at age 8, and my familial clan of shellfish worshippers could only clutch helplessly at their wallets because lobster was just around the next corner.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** Clams are an especially sustainable choice because, whether they are wild or farmed, they act as filter feeders, improving ocean water quality. Nutritionally, clams are high in vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and iron.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Manila clams (*Venerupis philippinarum*), accidentally brought over from Japan in oyster spat (young oysters), are easily available and widely cultivated. Manilas have a long shelf life.

Geoduck (*Panopea abrupta*), pronounced “gooey-duck,” are quite expensive these days, with much of the harvest exported to China. Every once in a while, though, geoduck is a special treat, and I couldn't help but include a recipe for it, as it is one of my favorite types of clam.

Other clams you might find on the Pacific Coast are our native littleneck (*Leukoma staminea*), the Pacific razor clam (*Siliqua patula*), California's pismo clam (*Tivela stultorum*), and the butter clam (*Saxidoma giganteus*). A warning: Butter clams can hold toxins in their flesh for several years—check the beaches for reports of PSP (paralytic shellfish poisoning, commonly referred to as “red tide”) if you plan to harvest them yourself. In Washington, call the Marine Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632.

**SEASON:** Wild clams can be harvested year-round but are easiest to gather in spring and early summer when the lowest tides occur during the daylight hours. (Follow all state regulations for licensing, limits, and harvest method, paying close attention to water-quality reports and closed beaches to keep you safe.) Farmed clams are pretty great year-round, though I tend to avoid clams altogether in mid- to late summer when they spawn and their shelf life is shortened.

**BUYING TIPS:** Look for unbroken clams that smell neutral or pleasant. If a clam is open, close it with your fingers; if it springs back open and doesn't gently close itself, it is probably dead. Pitch it. If the clam is mostly closed but you can see a bit of the foot sticking out, don't be shy about touching it to check for movement—the foot should retreat back into the shell. Extremely cold clams may be a bit

sluggish but will still react. When cooking clams, you may notice that a few don't open. You may have heard that eating these clams will make you sick, but the truth is that they are either full of mud or just not cooked enough. Bivalves open when dead—it's more important to discard any that gape open and won't close *before* you cook them as these are the ones that could make you sick. Sometimes you'll see live razor clams, which are a special treat. I've also seen them cleaned and vacuum-packed on ice.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** Where are these clams from? Clams are an abundant worldwide resource, making it unnecessary to ship them from far-off places. Consider reducing your carbon footprint by buying clams sourced as close to your home as possible. Are they wild or farmed? The majority of commercially sold clams are farmed. Also ask, when were they harvested?

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** If your clams were wild, they are likely to be sandy or muddy. Scrub them really well under cold running water. If caught recreationally, I'd also consider purging them, as I've had one or two sandy clams ruin a whole pot. To purge clams, place them in clean seawater after harvest and let them sit for twenty minutes. (Soaking clams in fresh water will kill them, and, as a wise person once said, a dead clam is not a tasty clam.) Then switch out the water and let them sit for another twenty minutes—this will usually clean the clams of any sand. I've never had to purge commercially farmed clams, since they are purged prior to sale. I still give farmed clams a quick scrubbing, though.

Store clams in a bowl in a cold part of your refrigerator. Place a damp towel directly on top of the clams (refrigerators are very dry places, and the towel protects against dehydrating your live shellfish). Good fishmongers store them live in saltwater or on ice that can drain easily. If a supermarket stores them on plastic trays, there should be perforations in the packaging so the clams don't suffocate. Ideally, use clams the day you buy them for best quality, but during the colder months they can last up to seven days after the harvest date, depending on how well they've been handled. In the warmer summer months, use clams within three days of the harvest date. Special geoduck care: Geoducks will “die within thirty seconds of being submerged in fresh water,” says Peter Downey, who grows geoducks for a living just outside Port Townsend, Washington. Store them in a bowl in the refrigerator, covered with a damp towel, and use within five days of harvest.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Commercial clam farming, clam “seed” are collected in the wild or in hatcheries, then commonly transferred as juveniles for what's known as “grow-out” on the seafloor. Clams are placed either directly on the seafloor or in nets, bags, or trays. They need to be able to burrow. Most Pacific Coast clams are harvested with hand rakes. Farmed geoducks are harvested by divers (at high tide) with the use of pressurized high-volume water guns. Razor clams are harvested by hand, using either a shovel or a “clam gun.”

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** In most recipes, it is fairly easy to substitute one type of shellfish for another. If fresh clams are not available, look for mussels. Another option would be to use frozen razor clams.

***All commercial shellfish*** come with harvest tags that list the date and location from which the shellfish were taken. If you ask someone to produce this tag and they can't, turn on your heel and make a dramatic exit (with lots of flair) because they have not earned your business. Shellfish of dubious origin is not to be trusted.







**steamers with beer**

2 cans beer  
2 onions, cut into medium dice  
3 ribs celery, sliced ¼ inch thin  
1 tablespoon Old Bay  
seasoning  
5 pounds clams, scrubbed  
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter,  
melted, foam skimmed  
1 cup cocktail sauce (make your  
own by combining ½ cup  
ketchup and ½ cup prepared  
horseradish with lemon juice  
and salt to taste)  
4 lemons, cut into wedges

*Back in the day, my family would get wild clams from Asbury Park on the Jersey shore. We preferred littlenecks or cherrystones and believed the smallest clams were the most desirable (which gave us something to fight over). Here on the Pacific Coast, it's manila and native littleneck country. If you have someone in your family who is a bivalve-a-phobe, this is the perfect gateway recipe. We used St. Pauli Girl, but any light beer will do.*

SERVES A ROWDY FAMILY OF 6 TO 8

In a large steamer pot (or you could use a pasta pot and steam the clams in two batches), combine the beer, onions, celery, and Old Bay seasoning. Let the liquid come to a boil and then reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes before adding the clams (in the steaming basket) on top. Cover the pot. As the clams start to open (check after 3 to 4 minutes), start removing them with tongs to a heated bowl. (Any clams that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.)

Serve the clams with bowls of melted butter, cocktail sauce, lemon wedges, and tiny cocktail forks. You can also dip the clams into the steaming brew. If you're really fond of salt, beer, and clams, you'll want to do what my grandfather did: use the spigot on the bottom of the steamer pot and pour yourself a mug of the infused brew. "Papa" wasn't a drinking man, but he sure liked his salty clam brew.

**PAIRING:** Beer! And make it cheap.

### **tamarind and ginger clams**

2 stalks lemongrass  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon grated fresh  
ginger  
1 serrano or jalapeño chile,

cut into thin rings  
1 red bell pepper, cut into  
small dice  
1 teaspoon tamarind paste  
½ cup dry white wine  
2 pounds clams, scrubbed  
1 (5.6 ounce) can coconut milk  
½ cup roughly chopped Thai  
or regular basil, for garnish

*My first taste of tamarind was eye opening. Pleasantly tart with an almost caramel berry flavor, it's a great option when you want to move beyond pairing seafood with the ubiquitous lemon wedge. Not that there is anything wrong with lemon. But, you know—push yourself to try something new. I like serving this dish with crusty bread for dipping into the juices, or with a bowl of fragrant jasmine rice.*

SERVES 4

Prepare the lemongrass by cutting off the top half of each stalk (where it is thinner and darker); discard this. (The bottom half is where all the flavor is.) Trim the very bottom of each stalk and discard, then cut the stalks into 1-inch pieces. Smack each piece with the side of a knife to help it release its flavor into the dish.

In a large saucepan or pot over medium-high heat, add the vegetable oil. When the oil is hot, add the lemongrass, ginger, chile, and bell pepper. Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, then add the tamarind, wine, and clams. Cook, covered, for 3 to 5 minutes, or until the clams open. (Any clams that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.)

Pour the clams and vegetables, along with the “pot liquor,” into a big serving bowl. Scoop the thick “cream” from the top of the coconut milk into a bowl, and mix well, reserving the rest of the milk for another use. Drizzle the coconut cream over the top of the clams and garnish with the basil. Instruct your guests to chew on—but not eat—the flavorful lemongrass pieces.

**PAIRING:** An Alsatian riesling, such as Lucien Albrecht Clos Himmelreich 2008, or an Alsatian gewürztraminer.

### **tomato-bacon clams with croutons**

For the croutons:

2 cups baguette or ciabatta-  
style bread, cut into medium  
cubes  
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the clams:

¼ cup shallots or green onions,  
cut into small dice or sliced  
4 strips bacon, cut into small  
dice (to make ½ cup)  
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive  
oil, plus additional for  
drizzling  
2 plum tomatoes, cut into  
medium dice  
½ bunch fresh Italian parsley,  
leaves chopped (about ½  
cup), stems finely chopped  
and kept separate  
¼ cup dry white vermouth or  
dry white wine  
Zest of 1 lemon (about 2  
teaspoons)  
2 pounds clams, scrubbed

*One of the most functional aspects of clams (and mussels and oysters, for that matter) is the convenient shell that creates the perfect basin to collect and then distribute sauce efficiently to your mouth. In this dish, each shell supports its own microcosm of tomatoes, bacon, and lemon zest. That's not even the best part, which I've saved for last. The best part is the crunchy croutons that soften a bit with tomato juice, bacon fat, extra-virgin olive oil, and clam juice.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

To prepare the croutons, mix the bread cubes with the olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper. Place the bread cubes on a sheet pan and bake for 7 minutes, or until they are lightly crispy in parts. Set aside.

To prepare the clams, in a sauté pan over medium heat, cook the shallots and bacon in the 1 teaspoon olive oil until the bacon fat is rendered and the shallots are very soft, about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, parsley stems, vermouth, lemon zest, and clams, and cook, covered, over medium heat until the clams open, 3 to 5 minutes. (Any clams that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) Add the parsley leaves.

To serve, place ½ cup of croutons in each of 4 bowls, then top with equal portions of the clams (making sure that everyone gets enough of the tomato and bacon goodness) and a drizzle of olive oil. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A rosé from Provence or Tavel, in the southern Rhône region of France, such as Delas Frères Tavel La Comballe 2008, or a dry rosé from any other region.





**geoduck crudo with shiso oil**

½ pound geoduck siphon meat,  
well cleaned‡  
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon seasoned rice  
wine vinegar  
6 fresh shiso leaves  
Freshly ground pink  
peppercorns  
Gray sea salt

*Random geoduck factoid: The oldest geoduck lived for 164 years. Let's take a moment to appreciate that. Somehow, this rather vulnerable clam, with the majority of its body outside of its protective shell, eluded predators and survived for a century and a half buried deep in the soft sand. Pretty incredible. Not-so-random geoduck factoid: No one—and I mean absolutely no one—can hold a geoduck and resist giggling.*

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER

Slice the geoduck paper thin with a very sharp knife and keep it cold in the refrigerator while you prepare the garnishes.

Combine the olive oil and rice wine vinegar with the shiso in a blender or food processor, and blend into a smooth, light green emulsion. Transfer the shiso oil to a squeeze bottle or a small jar with a narrow opening (you will have some left over: refrigerate it and use it on salads).

Place the geoduck slices decoratively on a platter, each slice slightly overlapping the previous one. Generously drizzle the shiso oil over the top. Season to taste with pink peppercorns and sea salt.

‡ Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean a geoduck.

**PAIRING:** Junmai-shu sake or a northern Rhône white.

### **homemade fettuccine with clams and marjoram**

Kosher salt  
2 pounds clams, scrubbed  
½ cup dry white vermouth  
2 sprigs fresh marjoram, plus  
1 tablespoon chopped  
marjoram leaves  
2 sprigs fresh thyme  
10 ounces Homemade  
Fettuccine (recipe follows)  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Pinch of red pepper flakes

1 cup roughly chopped fresh  
or canned tomatoes  
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh  
Italian parsley

*When I was a little kid, I knew I had “arrived” in the culinary sense when my dad tapped me to make his signature clam dip. I think, if memory serves, it consisted of sour cream, canned clams, Tabasco, Worcestershire sauce, and some more Tabasco. Fritos were involved. This dish is worlds away from that dip (best eaten while watching the New York Islanders play hockey), but chopping the clams brings me right back to my childhood kitchen, standing on my tiptoes and splashing hot sauce all over the counter.*

SERVES 4 AS A LUNCH OR LIGHT DINNER

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a heaping tablespoon of salt.

In the meantime, in a medium saucepan, add the clams, vermouth, marjoram sprigs, and thyme. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and cover the pot for 3 to 5 minutes, or until all the clams open. (Any clams that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) Using a colander, strain the juice into a bowl. Then pour the juice through a fine mesh strainer or coffee filter to further remove any sediment (this is especially important if you are using wild clams, which tend to be sandier than farmed) and set aside.

Remove the marjoram and thyme sprigs and discard. Separate the clams from their shells (make sure to scrape out the adductor muscle where the clam attaches to the shell—it’s tasty!). Chop the clams into small pieces and set aside.

Boil the pasta until it is just barely al dente, about 3 minutes. Drain the pasta in a colander and set aside. In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, add the butter, olive oil, and red pepper flakes. After a minute, add the tomatoes and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the chopped clams, marjoram leaves, parsley, pasta, and reserved clam liquor. Finish cooking the pasta in the sauce for 2 to 3 minutes, or until some of the sauce has been absorbed and the pasta is al dente. Check for seasoning and add more salt if necessary. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** An Orvieto, such as Antinori Campogrande Orvieto Classico, Tuscany, Italy, or a pino grigio.

## ***HOMEMADE FETTUCCINE***

2 cups all-purpose flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
3 large eggs  
1½ teaspoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
1 tablespoon water, plus more  
as needed

*People are always shocked when they realize that making pasta dough takes ten minutes tops. The skill comes in rolling the dough, and here, practice makes perfect. Two tips that will help your experience: First, when mixing and rolling the dough, you can always add flour to make a slightly wet dough dryer, but I find it much harder to add moisture back to a dry dough. Second, never clean your pasta machine with water. The moisture will trap flour bits that will tear your dough or make it stick when you roll it out. Dust your machine with flour and clean it with a brush before storing. One more note: You can roll out your dough by hand and eschew the machine. You will earn my respect. I did it once and understood immediately why Italian nonnas could crush my little pea-head in their massive biceps. This recipe doubles easily for larger groups.*

MAKES 10 OUNCES FRESH PASTA

**Making the dough in a food processor:** Add the flour, salt, eggs, olive oil, and water to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until the mixture comes together into a ball. If it should appear a bit dry, add small amounts of water until it comes together. Transfer the dough to a floured surface. Knead the dough for a few minutes and then wrap it in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 10 minutes.

**Making the dough by hand:** Mix the flour with the salt, and pour it out onto a wooden board or into a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour; add the eggs, olive oil, and water to the well, and with a fork, gently beat the liquids. Slowly start incorporating flour from the inside edges until you have a thick paste, then gather the dough and knead it on the board until it comes together into a ball.

**Rolling the dough:** Using a hand-cranked pasta machine, divide the dough into 2 workable pieces (keep one wrapped while you roll out the other). Run each piece through the machine on setting #1 (the widest setting on your machine). Fold it into three pieces (like a letter), and run it through again, inserting the narrow end first. Set the machine to setting #2 and repeat the process, dusting with flour as necessary. At this point, you don't need to fold the dough. Keep running it through each setting down to #6 or #7, depending on how thin you want the dough. I think a thinner noodle works well for this recipe.

**Partially drying the pasta sheets:** I like to lay the pasta sheets on a lightly floured counter for 10 minutes or so, flipping them over after 5 minutes. This dries them slightly, which is a good thing at this stage, as it will keep the individual noodles from sticking to each other when you cut the dough. Next, run the pasta sheets through the fettuccine cutter attachment on your pasta machine. Dust the noodles with flour and keep them spread out on the counter until you are ready to boil them. If you want to freeze them, wait about 30 more minutes, until they have dried further, and pull the pasta together into several bundles. Freeze these on a sheet pan, then transfer them to a resealable plastic freezer bag. Use within 2 weeks. You can cook the pasta directly from the freezer; just add a minute or so to the cooking time.









**mussels**

**Shelton, Washington: January 2010.** Gordon King, masterful mussel man and walking font of shellfish knowledge, whisks us out to the mussel rafts at Taylor Shellfish Farms. It's cold and windy and we're bundled up—hats, down coats, gloves, scarves. Gordon (in shorts) jumps out of the skiff and up onto the narrow, grated edging of the raft and shows us the lines where farmed mussels stretch far down into the water, filter feeding and thinking their mussel-y thoughts (which I imagine are quite limited).

Gordon is as passionate about farming mussels as I am about preparing them. The process is more straightforward than I had imagined it would be. Larvae are grown in a hatchery, placed onto mesh socks, dropped into Puget Sound, and then one-and-a-half years later are harvested by hand and sent to the processing plant where they are separated and cleaned.

First we are shown the adult mussels—ready to be harvested later that day. Moments later Gordon pulls up a rope gripped tightly by black-brown adolescents. Then he moves on to the other raft where the little babies, no bigger than a pinkie nail, are being lowered into their socks to take up residence for a time.

I draw my scarf tightly around my neck and turn away from the wind while scribbling notes in a little book. Later that night, a five-pound bag of mussels in the backseat, I stop by the market and pull out my note. It says: Mussels. Bread. Guinness. Cream. *Test this.*

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**Whether they are wild or farmed, mussels act as filter feeders, improving ocean water quality. Like all shellfish, their needs are simple: they eat solely from the phytoplankton floating by (no wild fish meal required).

**BY ANY OTHER NAME**Oh boy, this is not as easy as you'd think, as there is a lot of debate in scientific circles about mussel species. For our purposes here on the Pacific Coast, we'll focus on two species: Mediterranean mussels, or “meds” (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*), a nonnative species that is very easy to cultivate; and *Mytilus trossulus*, commonly known as the “Baltic” type. Washingtonians know the latter as Penn Cove mussels—which is sort of like saying Kleenex, as Penn Cove is a company in addition to being a place, but you get the idea. There is another species you might find if you go foraging, namely, the California mussel *Mytilus californianus*.

**SEASON:** Meds are at their best from June through October, which surprises many people who think all shellfish should be avoided in the summer—not true! Mussels, like other bivalves, are best in the months before they spawn and at their worst during and just after spawning. If you've ever purchased a mussel that only took up a tiny fraction of its shell, that puny, dried-out, sad, lil' thing probably just went through spawning. It's tired, and you don't want to eat it, trust me. The good news about *M. trossulus* is that this species is at its peak just when meds are petering out. The season for *M. trossulus*, aka Penn Cove mussels, is late fall through winter into early spring. If it helps you, you can think of meds being at their best in the heat of summer, just like the Mediterranean. Penn Coves are best in the cold months, just like a good hearty Northwesterner.

**BUYING TIPS:** Look for unbroken mussels that smell neutral or pleasant. If a mussel is open, close it; if it springs back open and doesn't gently close itself, it is probably dead. Learn from my mistakes.

I recently put my nose on some mussels that smelled just fine. I got them home, cooked them up, and it wasn't until their shells opened that it hit me: the unmistakable smell of baby diapers. I had forgotten to check the harvest tag on the mussels and was shopping at a fish place I don't normally frequent. When I went back and took a peek at the tag, I realized those mussels had been harvested eight days prior. There is a theory that mussels, unlike clams and oysters, can go off even though they are still alive when you cook them. Eight-day-old shellfish would have had to be handled perfectly, in ideal circumstances, to still taste fresh. Check the tags and use your judgment, but I'm comfortable with anything up to five days from harvest—if you trust the handling has been sound. When cooking mussels, you may notice that a few don't open. You may have heard that eating these mussels will make you sick, but the truth is that they are either full of mud or just not cooked enough. Bivalves open when dead—it's more important to discard any that gape open and won't close *before* you cook them as these are the ones that could make you sick.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** Are these farmed or wild? (This will give you a sense of how dirty or gritty the mussels might be—farmed tend to be a lot cleaner.) Mussels, like clams, are an abundant coastal food, so ask if they are local. There is no need to fly in mussels from other places when we have them close to home. Ask what species they are so you can determine the quality (remember the different spawning times).

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** Get your mussels home, put them in a bowl, and place a damp—not soaking wet—towel on the mussels to keep them from drying out in the refrigerator. Use them quickly, within a day or two (keeping in mind their harvest date).

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Mussels are either harvested in the wild by raking or dredging, or they are cultivated on ropes, mesh socks, or lines made from various materials, suspended most typically from rafts.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Clams are an easy and widely available substitute for mussels.

### **mussels with guinness cream**

2 pounds mussels  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive  
oil  
¼ cup minced shallots  
Pinch of salt  
⅛ teaspoon cayenne  
¾ cup Guinness extra stout  
¾ cup cream  
1 teaspoon freshly grated or  
prepared horseradish



1 teaspoon honey  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons minced fresh  
Italian parsley  
Good, crusty bread

*I try to eat fairly lightly, and that means I don't reach for cream every time I cook. Cream is a wonderful thing, but it can also be a crutch masking the flavors of the food it is paired with rather than elevating them. I tend to use cream judiciously, with the precision of a rifle, saving the cream cannon for ice cream. Then, one day, while developing mussel recipes, I hit on a major exception to this rule. It was on this auspicious day that Cream met Guinness, and a romance was born. Guinness elevated Cream into a decadent, malty, richer version of itself, and Cream elevated Guinness by rounding its caramel and chocolate edge with a warm white blanket. They lived happily ever after.*

SERVES 4 AS A LIGHT DINNER

Scrub and debeard the mussels.<sup>1</sup>

Heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil; when it is hot, add the shallots and salt. Sauté for 5 minutes, or until the shallots are lightly browned. Add the cayenne, Guinness, cream, horseradish, honey, and mussels. Toss the mussels, coating them with the sauce. Cover the pot, turn the heat to high, and cook for 3 minutes. Stir the mussels, and when most of them have opened, transfer them with a slotted spoon to a large serving bowl. (Any mussels that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) Boil the sauce gently until reduced by half. Turn off the heat, swirl in the butter and parsley, taste for seasoning, and pour the sauce over the mussels. Serve with bread to dip in the Guinness cream.

**PAIRING:** Guinness beer, but of course.

### **mussels with apple cider and thyme glaze**

2 pounds mussels  
¼ cup hard apple cider, such as  
Hornsby's  
2 sprigs fresh thyme, plus 1  
teaspoon chopped fresh  
thyme  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
3 tablespoons minced shallots  
¾ cup apple or pear cider  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
¼ cup clam juice

1 tablespoon grainy Dijon  
mustard  
1 teaspoon chopped capers  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

*It seems that most mussel recipes fall into two camps. The first camp has mussels mingling with garlic, tomatoes, parsley, and white wine. It's a nice camp: familiar, warm, and predictable. The second camp is more exotic, and there is where you'll find mussels dipped into a curry broth of coconut milk and chilies. I like both camps. I've been to them, many times. But I'd like to take you to a different camp—a camp where mussels hang out with mustard and thyme and apple cider. I think you'll like it here.*

SERVES 4 AS A LIGHT DINNER

Scrub and debeard the mussels.<sup>2</sup>

Add the hard apple cider and thyme sprigs to a pot over high heat. Add the mussels, cover, and cook for about 3 minutes, or until the mussels open. (Any mussels that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) Transfer the mussels to a large heatproof bowl, and cover to keep warm. Strain the mussel liquor through a fine mesh sieve and set aside.

Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in the shallots and cook for about 1 minute, or until they are fragrant. Add the reserved mussel liquor, apple cider, apple cider vinegar, and clam juice. Cook until the sauce is reduced by three quarters, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the mustard, chopped thyme, and capers. Season to taste with salt and pepper and pour the sauce over the mussels.

**PAIRING:** A Savennières, such as Domaine Jo Pithon “La Croix Picot” 2008, Loire Valley, France or an Alsatian pinot gris.





**mussels with pancetta and vermouth**

2 pounds mussels  
¼ cup dry white vermouth or  
dry white wine  
2 ounces pancetta, prosciutto,  
or bacon  
¼ cup finely minced shallots  
Zest of 1 lemon (about 2  
teaspoons), plus lemon juice  
for finishing  
¼ teaspoon cayenne  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
2 tablespoons minced fresh  
Italian parsley  
¼ cup panko or bread crumbs  
2 ounces (½ cup) grated  
Manchego cheese  
Rock salt, for serving

*My friend Ashlyn introduced me to a version of this recipe. She grew up in Louisiana and Mississippi and loved eating Oysters Bienville, a famous dish from New Orleans, which she then adapted by replacing the original seafood with mussels. In honor of Ashlyn, I'd like to tell you her favorite one-liner that she says every single time I mention I'm cooking mussels (or clams, or oysters, for that matter): "Vanna," she says, "I'd like to bivalve."*

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS AN APPETIZER

Scrub and debeard the mussels.<sup>3</sup>

Preheat the broiler. Place a rack in the lower middle position of the oven.

Put the mussels and vermouth in a saucepan over high heat and cover. Cook just until the mussels pop open, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove them with tongs as they open. (Any mussels that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) When the mussels are done, strain the mussel liquor and reserve. Let the mussels cool.

In a wide sauté pan, cook the pancetta over medium heat until it releases some of its fat, about 5 minutes. Add the shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are soft, about 5 more minutes. Add the reserved mussel liquor, lemon zest, and cayenne and deglaze the pan, letting the juices evaporate completely. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and fold in the mayonnaise. In a separate bowl, mix the parsley and panko.

When the mussels are cool, twist off the top shells and discard. Place the mussels in their bottom shells on a sheet pan. Top each mussel with a small amount of the pancetta-shallot mixture and then coat the top with some of the parsley-panko mixture. Finish each with a sprinkle of Manchego.

Broil the mussels until the topping is light brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Don't overcook them or they will get tough. Serve on a bed of rock salt with a squeeze of the lemon juice, if desired.

**PAIRING:** A Chablis, such as Albert Bichot Chablis Domaine Long-Depaquit 2008, Burgundy France, or a rosé.



### **mussels with bacon and israeli couscous**

2 pounds mussels  
4 strips bacon, cut into small  
dice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup small-diced onion  
1 teaspoon sweet smoked  
Spanish paprika or sweet  
Hungarian paprika  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon red pepper flakes  
1 cup Israeli couscous<sup>4</sup>  
Pinch of salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry white wine  
1 cup water  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cream  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup roughly chopped fresh  
Italian parsley

*Dear Grandma: I know when you see the ingredients in this dish, it might give you pause, as you raised me to be a good Jew, but I just want to remind you that, above all else, you taught me to see the humor in life. Isn't it funny how I combined bacon and Israeli couscous with shellfish? Love, Becky. P.S. I had originally called this recipe "Bad Jew Stew," but my editor thought that wasn't the best idea I've ever had, so it could've been worse.*

**SERVES 4 AS A LIGHT DINNER**

Scrub and debeard the mussels.<sup>5</sup>

Heat a large pot over medium heat. Add the bacon and render the fat, about 10 minutes. Transfer the bacon with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate and set aside. Add the onion, paprika, and red pepper flakes and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the onions have softened. Add the couscous and salt. Sauté until the couscous is lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and water and scrape the bottom of the pan. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the mussels and cream, stir well, cover, and cook until the mussels open, another 3 to 4 minutes. (Any mussels that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.)

Add the parsley and reserved bacon, taste for seasoning, and serve.

**PAIRING:** A California chardonnay, such as Sonoma Cutrer Russian River 2008, or a French white Burgundy.





**mussels with sweet-and-sour cabbage and saffron aioli**



For the sweet-and-sour cabbage:  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pound (3 cups) thinly shredded red cabbage  
6 ounces (1 cup) thinly sliced fennel bulb  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons honey  
2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup red wine vinegar

For the saffron aioli:  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon saffron  
1½ tablespoons lemon juice, plus additional for seasoning  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon smoked chile powder (such as piment d'Espelette<sup>6</sup>)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
1 egg yolk  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil (pick one that has a neutral flavor, such as canola or grapeseed)

For the mussels:  
2 pounds mussels  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons high-heat vegetable oil

*One thing we have on the Pacific Coast is a temperate offshore climate that favors rosemary. Rosemary grows in such abundance here that it strikes me as funny every time I see someone purchasing it in a store. I prefer to “borrow” my rosemary on a dusk walk around the neighborhood. The neighbors have far too much; so, technically, I’m just helping them thin their crop. (Aim high when choosing your skewers for this dish, as you never know what animals might have taken a liking to the bush.) What I love most about this dish is the interplay of crispy-salty mussels with tart-sweet cabbage and heady, creamy aioli. You can serve the cooked mussels on rosemary skewers made by stripping the bottom of four-inch sections of rosemary and then spearing the mussels, as in the photo (opposite).*

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS AN APPETIZER

To prepare the cabbage, heat the olive oil in a medium pot over medium-high heat. Add the cabbage, fennel, salt, honey, rosemary, and vinegar. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook, covered, for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season to taste with salt. Set aside and cover to keep warm.

To prepare the aioli, in a small bowl combine the saffron, lemon juice, chile powder, and salt, and let the saffron soak for about 10 minutes. Add to a blender along with the egg yolk. With the machine running, slowly drizzle in the vegetable oil. Alternatively, carefully whisk the egg yolk into the saffron mixture and then add the oil (a few drops at a time to start and then in a steady stream) into the mixture by hand. Season to taste with salt and lemon juice. Set aside.

To prepare the mussels, scrub and debeard the mussels.<sup>7</sup>

In a stockpot over high heat, add 2 tablespoons water and the mussels, cover, and cook for about 3 minutes, or until the mussels open. (Any mussels that do not open can be pried open using an oyster shucker or discarded.) Transfer the mussels to a large bowl, removing and discarding their shells, and set aside. Strain the mussel liquor through a fine mesh sieve and add ½ cup of the liquor to the cabbage. Discard the rest or use it in a soup or sauce the next night.





Dredge the mussels in the flour and shake them in a strainer to remove any excess. In a large sauté pan over high heat, add the vegetable oil. When it is hot, sear the mussels until caramelized on both sides,

about 4 minutes total.

To serve, pile the mussels on top of the warm cabbage and serve with a bowl of aioli on the side for dipping.

**PAIRING:** An albariño, such as Adegas Gran Vinum Esencia Divina Albariño 2008, Rías Baixas Spain, or a grenache-based Spanish rosé.







# oysters

***I remember eating my first raw oyster*** just as surely as others remember their first lake dive, hands pointed together in prayer, toes death-gripped to the splintery edge of the dock. Truth be told, my experience was a culinary half step. I couldn't quite get myself to tackle the whole oyster, so I licked shyly at the liquor. Surprised at how delicious it was, I then drank it with gusto, letting my friend eat the oyster itself, while she puzzled at my strange workaround. When I finally went whole hog a few months later and tipped the entire oyster back, I realized all that fear and trepidation were for naught. A little fear before trying something new is to be expected; but surely it is the wise who know that working through that fear as quickly as possible can lead to a lifetime of culinary enjoyment. For those still perched on the dock's edge: fried oysters are a damn fine baby step.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE** Whether they are wild or farmed, oysters act as filter feeders, improving ocean water quality. Like all shellfish, their needs are simple: they eat solely from the phytoplankton floating by (no wild fish meal required). Oysters are healthful: they are high in vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, iron, and calcium; one oyster contains 370 mg of omega-3 fatty acids.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** There are five species of oysters commonly found on the Pacific Coast: Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea giga*) were brought to the Pacific Coast from Japan in the 1920s. Most Pacific oysters (as well as Eastern oysters) are named for the bay or inlet where they are grown rather than the species. For example, California's Tomales Bay or Drakes Bay oysters both happen to be Pacific oysters (ditto for Canada's Fanny Bay oysters), so it gets sort of confusing. Like all oysters, their flavor changes depending on where they grow. This is the ultimate pleasure of being an oyster aficionado—like wine, oysters have *terroir*. Pacific varieties can get really, really big (which, in my opinion, makes for better barbecue or chowder).

Olympia oysters (*Ostrea conchaphila* or *O. lurida*), aka Olys, are the tiniest and most celebrated oysters on the Pacific Coast, and also our only native species. Olys were so popular during the gold rush that they were nearly eradicated; back in the mid-1850s, single Olympia oysters went for a silver dollar, the equivalent of about \$25 per oyster today. Olympias are a great starter for a raw-oyster newbie—they're so small, they're cute, and it's hard to be intimidated by cute.

Kumamoto oysters (*Crassostrea sikamea*), aka Kumos, are appreciated by all for their sweetness; their beautiful deep, sculptured shell; and the fact that they are still at their best into the summer, when other oysters diminish in quality due to spawning. They are often described as sweet, creamy, and nutty, and are also a great first oyster for half-shell virgins.

Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*), aka Virginicas, Gulf oysters, or American oysters, are truly American, ranging up and down the East Coast, along the Gulf of Mexico, and also here on the Pacific Coast. They tend to be firmer when grown in colder northern climes, which makes for a delicious oyster on the half shell. A Totten Inlet Virginica I had in Washington tasted of the sea, with a finish that lasted forever, like the very best kind of wine.

European flats (*Ostrea edulis*), aka Belons, were introduced to the Northwest in the 1950s and, not surprisingly, are native to Europe. Like the related Olympia oyster, the parent holds on to the

developing larvae within the shell before releasing it into the water after a few weeks. European flats are round in shape with an extremely shallow cup. The shells are quite brittle, and the oysters are very briny.

**SEASON:** The rule “Only eat oysters in months with an ‘r’ in them” (so, for example, don’t eat oysters in May, June, July, or August) is sort of right, sort of not. I don’t eat oysters when they spawn (reproduce), which is usually during the hotter months. An August oyster might be watery, gritty, and lacking in flavor. Generally speaking, oysters are better in the colder months, but modern refrigeration makes the rule less accurate. A nonspawning oyster harvested in the summer that is well handled can be delicious.

**BUYING TIPS :** You’ll find live oysters either in saltwater tanks or stored on ice. As with all shellfish, you’ll want to buy them live. You won’t find oysters, unlike clams or mussels, slightly open. Or rather, if you find an oyster slightly open, it’s probably dead. Oysters know how delicious they are—it’s easier to get into Fort Knox than it is to get into a really fresh oyster.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET** Ask to see the harvest tag so you know when the oysters were pulled out of the water. They can have a shelf life of up to two weeks, but when eating them raw, I prefer to get oysters that are as fresh as possible. I feel they taste best when I’m standing knee-deep in the water, shucking the oyster against my thigh and eating it right there. I think the quality and flavor lessens the longer and farther away you are from this idyllic picture.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** You’ll commonly find fresh oysters in two forms: in their shell, live (also known as “shell stock”), or already shucked (usually packed in half-pint or pint-size containers; note that the jarred “smalls” are actually more like medium-size oysters in the shell). Store oysters in the shell in a bowl, and drape a damp—not soaking wet—towel over them to keep them from drying out in the refrigerator. If I’m going to eat oysters raw, I buy them the day I want to eat them. That’s just me, but it probably should be you too. If you buy them shucked, be sure to check the packing date and keep them in the coldest part of your refrigerator. I typically cook preshucked oysters.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** You’ll find wild oysters clinging to rocks or clumped together in intertidal areas, a product of what’s known as “natural set,” in which larvae naturally attach themselves to old shells or rocky surfaces. Cultivated oysters develop from larvae that are, for the most part, grown in hatcheries and then encouraged to attach to shells (known as cultch). Cultivated oysters are grown in a variety of ways: in bags; suspended in the water column in trays or lantern nets; tumbled (to create a deep cup and smooth edges such as in Kushi and Shigoku oysters); or simply spread on the beach, what’s known as bottom culture.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** While I’d love to say there is a type of seafood you can easily

substitute for oysters, I think that would be a disservice to how unique an oyster is. If you're craving oyster chowder, you can often find very high-quality oysters already shucked, in jars, that are great to use if you can't find them in the shell. Can't find shucked? Make a chowder with clams, geoduck, or razor clams.

***Oyster spawn on a half shell?*** Not exactly something you want to pay a premium for, so it's good to know what oysters look like during and after spawning so that you can avoid eating them. At this time, they are not at their best. Some oyster growers sell triploid oysters, which are essentially sterile. Triploids, or "trips," are plump and juicy when the others are reproducing. When an oyster spawns, the oyster will be milky and mushy, and after spawning, the oyster meat will be skinny, gray, and watery. Mmm, I'll take a dozen please! Typically this happens in the summer months, except for Kumamotos, which spawn during the winter, and of course the sterile trips.

### **oyster and artichoke soup**

2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 bunch green onions, thinly  
sliced  
2 ribs celery, thinly sliced  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground  
pepper  
1 teaspoon dried tarragon  
(optional)  
1 pint preshucked fresh oysters  
2 (14-ounce) cans artichoke  
bottoms, drained  
1 cup clam juice  
⅛ teaspoon cayenne  
4 ounces (1 cup) medium-diced  
oyster or button mushrooms  
2 tablespoons cream sherry or  
dry sherry  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
½ cup cream  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
1 tablespoon minced fresh  
tarragon (optional)

*Last year, when my friend said she wanted to try a recipe for oyster and artichoke soup, I admit I wrinkled my nose. Some ingredient combinations can be truly terrible—others you nod your head up and down, a grin forming on your face because the oyster's sweet, soft brininess is a seafood*

*sister to artichoke's creamy yet firm vegetal quality. If you use jarred high-quality preshucked oysters, the dish comes together really fast. It has become my new favorite soup.*

SERVES 4 TO 6

Melt the butter in a stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the green onions, celery, salt, pepper, and dried tarragon (if not using fresh tarragon for serving). Sauté for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Meanwhile, drain the oysters, reserving the liquid. Rinse them under cold running water, dry them on a paper towel, then roughly chop them. Set aside.

Purée one can of the artichokes with the clam juice in a blender or food processor until smooth. Pour the purée into a 4-cup measuring cup, add the reserved oyster liquor, and then add water to make 4 cups of liquid. Set aside.

Roughly chop the other can of artichokes. Add them to the stockpot, along with the cayenne and mushrooms. Sauté over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes, or until the mushrooms release their juices. Add the cream sherry, stirring to loosen any bits clinging to the pot, and then add the flour. Sauté for another 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the reserved artichoke purée to the pot and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the oysters, cream, and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper, turn off the heat, and let the soup sit for 5 minutes before stirring in the fresh tarragon (if the dried tarragon was omitted). Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A white Burgundy, such as Manuel Olivier Chardonnay 2008, or a white Bordeaux.





**hangtown fry**

8 strips thick-cut bacon  
½ pint preshucked fresh  
oysters, preferably “small,” or  
1 dozen medium-size oysters  
in the shell, shucked<sup>8</sup>  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
8 eggs  
1½ cups roughly chopped  
arugula  
½ teaspoon Tabasco  
¼ cup half-and-half  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
½ cup panko or bread crumbs  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil  
4 slices good crusty bread,  
toasted  
4 lemon wedges, for garnish

*Hangtown fry was invented during the 1850s Gold Rush in Placerville, California, then known as Hangtown. Legend has it that a rich gold prospector coined the name when he demanded the most expensive dish at a local hotel. In those days, the costliest ingredients were bacon (from the East Coast), eggs (likely cormorant eggs delicately brought in from off the coast of San Francisco) and oysters (brought on ice or in saltwater barrels from the city). I’ve nicknamed this historically famous dish “Hangover Fry” because, well, it does the job—let’s just leave it at that.*

SERVES 4

Lay the bacon on an aluminum-foil-lined baking sheet. Place in the cold oven, then turn the oven on to 400°F and set the timer for 20 minutes. Soak the oysters in the buttermilk for 30 minutes in the refrigerator.

In the meantime, melt the butter in a large sauté pan over medium-low heat. Whisk the eggs with the arugula, Tabasco, and half-and-half. Season with salt and pepper and then pour the mixture into the pan. Grab a wooden spoon and start stirring. You will be tempted to turn the heat up, but don’t. If you keep stirring the eggs at a medium-low temperature they will produce the creamiest, most delicious eggs you’ve ever had. It should take 8 to 10 minutes to set into small curds, but they will still have lots of moisture. Look for creamy, barely set eggs. When the eggs are done, place them at the back of the stove to keep warm.

When the bacon has finished cooking, remove it from the oven and set aside to drain on a paper-towel-lined plate. Drain the oysters and discard the buttermilk. Place the panko on a plate and dredge the oysters, coating them well on both sides.





In a fresh sauté pan over high heat, add the vegetable oil. Pan-fry the oysters until they brown on one side, 1 to 2 minutes. Then flip them and cook just 30 seconds more on the other side.

Serve each person a piece of toast and top with eggs, 2 slices of bacon, and a fried oyster or two. Garnish with a lemon wedge.

**PAIRING:** A white Burgundy, such as Chateau Laboure Roi 2007, or an Oregon chardonnay. A mimosa or Bloody Mary would be quite tasty with this too—hair of the dog and all that.







**jet's oyster succotash**

3 strips bacon, cut into small  
dice (about  $\frac{1}{3}$ cup)  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup minced shallots  
1 small carrot, cut into small  
dice (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)  
1 teaspoon minced fresh lemon  
thyme, or 1 teaspoon regular  
thyme plus  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon lemon  
zest  
1 cup shelled edamame<sup>9</sup>  
1 cup corn, thawed if using  
frozen  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  pint preshucked fresh oysters  
or 6 large oysters in the shell,  
shucked,<sup>10</sup> coarsely chopped  
and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid reserved  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
Tabasco  
2 tablespoons minced fresh  
Italian parsley

*After a day spent scouring the beaches of southern Puget Sound for clams and oysters, my friends gathered together in my kitchen and a cooking frenzy ensued. My buddy Jet grabbed some corn and some herbs, and before long a version of this recipe was on the table: buttery, sweet, herbal, and smoky-salty. Oyster succotash goes from side dish to meal when you serve it with greens and some bruschetta. In the winter (since frozen edamame and corn are always available), it would be great alongside roasted chicken. In the summer, serve it with grilled flank steak or barbecued ribs.*  
SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the bacon until its fat is rendered and it is crisp, 6 to 7 minutes. Transfer the bacon with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate, keeping the fat in the pan. Add the butter, shallots, and carrot. Sauté for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft. Add the lemon thyme, edamame, and corn, and sauté until the corn caramelizes, another 2 to 3 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the oyster liquid and reduce until the mixture is dry. Add the oysters, lemon juice, and white wine vinegar. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and Tabasco. Sprinkle with the parsley.

**PAIRING:** A Chablis, such as Bouchard Aîné & Fils 2007, Burgundy, France, or a muscadet.

**oysters on the half shell with cucumber sorbet**

⅓ cup water  
3 tablespoons sugar, plus  
extra for dusting jalapeños  
1 jalapeño, cut in half length-  
wise, seeds removed, and  
sliced into ⅛-inch half  
moons  
1½ tablespoons seasoned rice  
wine vinegar  
¼ teaspoon salt  
14 ounces (about 1 medium)  
cucumber, peeled and  
chopped  
24 oysters in the shell,  
shucked<sup>11</sup>  
Rock salt or crushed ice, for  
serving

*I love oysters as naked as the day they were born. It takes a special accompaniment to a raw oyster to turn my head; most of the time, it seems to diminish the oyster's magnificence more than accent it. Until now. The combination of a slightly sweet, briny oyster with a refreshingly icy and vegetal cucumber sorbet would be special enough, but then you gild the lily by adding just a touch of candied jalapeño—another green note, but this time with a lingering fiery finish. After a few of these oysters, you can't help but feel completely alive, your taste buds dancing on your tongue.*

SERVES 2 TO 6, DEPENDING ON YOUR FRIENDS' LOVE FOR OYSTERS

In a small saucepan over high heat, add the water and sugar. Cook, stirring, until the sugar completely dissolves, about 2 minutes. Add the jalapeño. Cook, simmering gently, for 5 minutes. Strain the jalapeño, saving the syrup. Lay the jalapeño out on a piece of parchment or wax paper to dry and dust lightly with sugar.

Add the syrup to a blender along with the rice wine vinegar, salt, and cucumber. Blend well and then strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Chill well and freeze according to your ice cream or sorbet maker's instructions. Firm the sorbet in the freezer for at least 2 hours. If you don't have an ice cream maker, you can place the mixture in a glass dish in the freezer and stir every 20 minutes until it is frozen.

Spread the rock salt on a platter and arrange the oysters carefully on the salt. Scoop tiny balls (I use a melon baller) of cucumber sorbet and place on the oysters. Quickly garnish each oyster with 1 piece of candied jalapeño and serve on the double, before the ice melts.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Matanzas Creek 2008, Sonoma, California, or a Muscade Sèvre et Maine.

**oyster, chorizo, and apple stuffing**

For the bread cubes:

6 packed cups bread cubes, crusts on

## For the chorizo:

12 ounces ground pork

shoulder

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1½ teaspoons smoked sweet or

bittersweet Spanish paprika

½ teaspoon ancho or New

Mexican chile powder<sup>[12](#)</sup>

½ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon cayenne

2 teaspoons sherry vinegar

For the stuffing:

4 tablespoons (½ stick)

unsalted butter, plus

additional for the casserole

1 rib celery, cut into small dice

1 cup small-diced onion

1 tart apple, unpeeled, cored,

cut into small dice

Pinch of salt

1 tablespoon high-heat

vegetable oil

½ packed cup minced fresh

Italian parsley

1 egg, beaten

1 tablespoon minced fresh

thyme

1 quart preshucked fresh

oysters or 2 dozen large

Pacific oysters in the shell,

shucked,<sup>[13](#)</sup> roughly chopped

and liquid reserved

3 cups turkey or chicken stock

(include in this amount the

reserved oyster liquid)

*I adapted this recipe from chef Mark Fuller of Spring Hill restaurant in West Seattle, one of my favorite spots to go for both brunch and dinner. Making your own chorizo is painfully easy,*



*especially if you purchase preground pork shoulder. With the oysters and apples, this stuffing feels like a quintessential Northwest Thanksgiving side dish.*

SERVES 4 TO 6 AS A SIDE DISH (WITH LEFTOVERS)

To prepare the bread cubes, preheat the oven to 250°F. Spread the bread cubes out over 2 baking sheets. Bake for 15 minutes. Set aside.

To prepare the chorizo, mix all of its ingredients well in a medium bowl. Test-fry a small amount of chorizo and taste for seasoning. Set aside in the refrigerator.

To prepare the stuffing, in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, add the butter. When the butter has melted, add the celery, onion, and apple, and cook until softened, stirring often, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the salt. Transfer the vegetables to a large bowl.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Reheat the sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the vegetable oil, and when its hot, add the chorizo mixture. Cook, breaking up the meat, until it is no longer pink, 6 to 7 minutes. Add it to the bowl of vegetables, along with the parsley, egg, thyme, stock/ oyster liquid, oysters, and reserved bread cubes. Mix well, letting the bread cubes soak up all the liquid. Transfer mixture to a buttered casserole dish and dot the top with a little more butter. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 25 minutes covered and then for another 15 minutes uncovered, or until the top crisps and browns.

**PAIRING:** A pinot noir, such as Belle Vallée 2007, Willamette Valley, Oregon, or a Beaujolais.



**dungeness crab**



***I love me some Dungeness crab***—all ways, but especially pure and simple, where the shortest distance between two points is a straight line from a cracked crab to my mouth. Butter is always a nice accompaniment, but good Dungeness crab seems to contain its own oceany butter: rich yet still crisp and clean. (An extra bonus is its onboard sea salt seasoning.)

When I worked at The Herbfarm Restaurant, I used to pick up our live crabs from the fish market. That long drive out to Woodinville was always punctuated by quick peeks into my rearview mirror to see if an army of rogue crustaceans was plotting to hijack the car. They never did, which was a very good thing, because what a loss if I had missed out on transforming these crabby warriors into the dishes of chef Jerry Traunfeld's imaginings: paper-thin pasta squares enfolding crabmeat with a delicate lemon beurre blanc, herbed crab cocktails with shiso, and poofy, delicate crab soufflés.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**The Dungeness crab fishery is well managed and abundant up and down the coast, from California to Alaska. The population fluctuates year to year and, generally speaking, the allowable catch is restricted by size (only the bigger crabs—size minimums vary by area), sex (males only), and molt times (only nonmolting crabs may be harvested).

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Dungeness crabs (*Cancer magister*) are also known as “Dungies.”

**SEASON:** Dungeness crabs molt many times in their first few years and once a year after that. Most commercial harvesting of Dungeness crab occurs in the fall and winter, though as you go north, the season extends into spring (in British Columbia) and summer (in Alaska). Crabs can be caught recreationally throughout the year in some areas. If you plan to go crabbing, check local sport-fishing regulations to make sure the season is open. Soft-shell crabs should be gently released to allow them to harden up (you get less yield by weight when the shell is soft).

**BUYING TIPS:**You will find Dungeness crab in many forms: live in saltwater or seawater tanks; cooked, cleaned and on ice; as picked crabmeat; in sealed plastic tubs; or in cans (most canned crabmeat needs to be kept under refrigeration). I've found that the tubbed and canned Dungeness crab can be of surprisingly good quality. If you want a live Dungie, look for a spirited one and make sure it has both of its claws (sometimes they get knocked off or lost in a fight; amazingly, crabs can grow limbs back when they molt). Cooked crabs (known as whole cooks) are often less expensive than live ones because they don't need to be as perfect (they can be missing limbs, etc.).

***If you get a chance to go crabbing***, make sure you know how to “sex” a crab. Flip it onto its back; you'll see what's known as the apron. On males the apron looks tall and slender like the Washington Monument; on females it is wider and domed, like the Capitol Building. Females hold their eggs under their apron. Because they are needed to replenish the species, it's illegal to keep females, so make sure you are harvesting only males.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:**you're buying live Dungies, ask when the crab was caught and how long it's been in the tank. You'll want to buy live crabs soon after they've been pulled from the water, if possible. They can lose fat (and therefore flavor) the longer they sit in tanks. If your Dungie is already cooked, ask when it was cooked (you'll

want to eat it within a day or two). If the picked crabmeat looks like it is sitting in a pool of water, walk on by—you'll pay for that water (and seafood sitting in a pool of water tells me all I need to know about the standards of that fish market).

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** If you buy a live crab, they will probably wrap it in newspaper and put it in a bag for you. I like to throw that bag immediately into the fridge—you'll want to cook the crab that day. Keep in mind that it is inadvisable to cook and eat dead crabs, even if they died while you had them, as bacteria multiply rapidly on dead crabs. If you catch the crab live, keep it in a bucket of clean seawater until you are ready to cook it. About thirty minutes before I want to cook a crab, I start boiling a big pot of heavily salted water and then send the crab on a short tour of my freezer. A thirty-minute chill puts the crab into a trance of sorts, slowing its metabolism and making it easier to throw into the pot.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** Crabs are wild caught, most typically in pots, though divers or waders can grab them by hand or with a net. I've even seen them being caught with a fishing pole/pot hybrid, the pot lowered on the reel. Asking any two crabbers what bait they use is sure to start a heated discussion: I've heard everything from cat food (the stinkier, the better) to fish heads to frozen turkey drumsticks.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** Because of their sweet flavor, shrimp or scallops are a good substitute for Dungeness crabmeat. There are also other Pacific Coast crabs not included in this book that would work well, such as Alaska snow crab and king crab legs. In particular, look for red rock crab that can be caught recreationally (they're delicious and mean little buggers).

## CRAB THREE WAYS

When you need to buy Dungeness crabmeat you can go one of three ways:

1. ***Purchase pre-cooked, cleaned, and picked crabmeat.*** This is the most convenient option, but not necessarily the freshest option. Note that picked crabmeat has been picked from the crab but it might not have been picked through again for shell pieces, so do check it before using.
2. ***Purchase pre-cooked whole crab.*** You can ask the fishmonger to clean the crab for you, which means they will gut and rinse it. You will still have to crack and pick the meat yourself. This is an economical way to go.
3. ***Purchase live crab.*** Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to cook and clean a crab. This option is desirable for the ultimate in freshness and gives you total control over the cooking process. This option is usually the same or slightly more expensive than buying pre-cooked whole crab.

**A HELPFUL CONVERSION** Approximately one quarter of the crab's weight is meat, so if you need one pound of crabmeat, you'll need four pounds of whole crab.



## dungeness crab panzanella with charred-tomato vinaigrette

2 cups halved cherry or grape  
tomatoes  
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-  
virgin olive oil  
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
½ cup roughly chopped fresh  
basil leaves  
2½ cups crusty bread from a  
good artisan loaf, cut into  
medium cubes, crusts on  
10 ounces Dungeness crabmeat

*I think if I had been given the following as a word problem in junior high, I might have actually rocked math: If a fabulous bread salad was on a train traveling east at 40 miles per hour, and a shipment of live Dungeness crabs was coming west traveling at 90 miles per hour, and just prior to impact someone threw some flaming tomatoes and fresh basil onto the tracks, how awesome would lunch be? You will have leftover dressing, which is a good thing, as you can spread it on toast, toss it with pasta or salad, serve it with Newspaper Crab with Three Sauces (page 53), or just eat it off a spoon.*

SERVES 4 AS A LIGHT LUNCH

Preheat the broiler. Place a rack in the top third of the oven.

Toss the tomatoes with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, 1 teaspoon of the balsamic vinegar, a pinch of salt, and a grind of pepper. Spread the tomatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet. Broil for 5 minutes, or until the tomatoes are charred in spots. Transfer to a bowl and set aside, leaving the broiler on.

Add half of the tomatoes to a blender, along with half of the basil, the remaining ¼ cup olive oil and 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar, and another pinch of salt and grind of pepper. Blend until the dressing is smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

Toss the bread cubes with 2 tablespoons of the dressing. Spread them on the baking sheet and broil until lightly crispy in places, about 5 minutes. Stir the cubes and broil for another minute or two, until they are crispy all over. Set aside.

Double-check the crabmeat for any stray bits of shell. Gently squeeze out any excess moisture with your hands. Toss the crab with 2 tablespoons of the dressing. To serve, mix the crab with the reserved bread cubes, reserved tomatoes, and 2 more table-spoons of the dressing. Add more salt and pepper if necessary, and garnish with the remaining basil leaves.

**PAIRING:** A sparkling rosé, such as Graham Beck Brut 2007, South Africa, or a still rosé.





newspaper crab with three sauces



4 cooked, cleaned Dungeness  
crabs  
½ cup Soy Caramel Sauce  
(recipe follows)  
½ cup Avocado Herb Sauce  
(recipe follows)  
½ cup Lemon Panko Sauce  
(recipe follows)

*One of my favorite things to do when friends come to Seattle for the first time is to take them to Pike Place Market, where we pick out cooked and cleaned crabs, grab some local microbrews from Pike Place Brewery, then jump in the car and head to the Queen Anne neighborhood. I've got the Sunday paper, a blanket, and lots of paper towels in the car, and we lay out a picnic at this little park that overlooks the entire Seattle skyline. If it is raining—which, this being Seattle, it is wont to do—I take my guests back to my house, where I completely gild the lily by accompanying the crab with several sauces. I'm sure you'll prefer one sauce over the others, but I've yet to meet anyone who didn't shamelessly lick the bottom of the soy caramel bowl.*

SERVES 4 OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS

Lay several sheets of newspaper out on the table along with plenty of napkins and various tools for cracking (crab crackers, rolling pins). Serve the crabs with larger shared or smaller individual bowls of each sauce for dipping.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Cliff Lede 2008, Napa Valley, California, or a light beer, such as Pike Place Brewery's Naughty Nellie.

## ***SOY CARAMEL SAUCE***

2 tablespoons soy sauce  
¼ cup sake  
3 tablespoons mirin  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
¼ cup (½ stick) cold unsalted  
butter, cut into tablespoons

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP

In a small saucepan, add the soy sauce, sake, mirin, sugar, and lemon juice. Bring to a boil over high heat, then lower the heat and reduce to a simmer. Cook the sauce until it is reduced by half, 5 to 7 minutes. Turn the heat down to its lowest setting and whisk in the butter 1 tablespoon at a time, adding each only after the previous one has melted. Taste and add more lemon juice if desired.

## ***AVOCADO HERB SAUCE***

1 avocado, peeled and pitted  
¼ cup packed fresh cilantro  
leaves and stems  
¼ cup plain Greek-style  
yogurt  
1 tablespoon mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed  
lime juice (about ½ lime)  
½ teaspoon champagne  
vinegar or white wine  
vinegar  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon Tabasco

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend to a smooth purée.

## ***LEMON PANKO SAUCE***

½ cup panko  
½ tablespoon freshly grated  
lemon zest (about 1 small  
lemon)  
¼ cup finely chopped fresh  
Italian parsley  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Pinch of cayenne  
¼ cup unsalted butter

MAKES A GENEROUS ½ CUP

In a small bowl, mix the panko with the lemon zest, parsley, salt, and cayenne.

Melt the butter and pour it into a small bowl.

Serve the panko mixture and butter separately: instruct your guests to dip the crab into the melted butter and then into the lemon panko crumbs.

**chilled cucumber-coconut soup with dungeness crab**



1 tablespoon peanut or vegetable oil  
1 cup small-diced onion  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
1 pound cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and sliced ½ inch thick  
1½ cups chicken or vegetable stock  
1 cup coconut milk (from a 14-ounce can), reserving ¼ cup of the thick cream at the top for garnish  
1 cup packed fresh basil leaves, plus 2 tablespoons chopped  
¼ cup packed fresh cilantro leaves and stems, plus 1 tablespoon chopped  
3 dashes of Tabasco  
Juice of 1 medium lime (about 1½ tablespoons)  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
¼ pound Dungeness crabmeat  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

*Jean-Georges Vongerichten is the owner of numerous restaurants around the world, including the three-Michelin-starred Jean-Georges in New York City. A brilliant food alchemist, he showed me that cucumbers could be whirled together with herbs and fish sauce in a cold blended soup. I adapted his recipe by adding coconut milk and more herbs. This is a great soup to make the day before and keep chilled. When you want to eat it, simply mix the crab with the herbs and, as Margaret Cho would say, “Put on your eatin’ dress.”*

SERVES 4

Heat the peanut oil in a stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, salt, and pepper, and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the onion has softened. Add the cucumbers and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes more, then add the chicken stock, coconut milk, 1 cup basil leaves, and ¼ cup cilantro. Bring to a simmer and cook for 2 minutes. Add the Tabasco, half of the lime juice, and the fish sauce. Transfer the soup to a blender and blend to a smooth, bright green purée. Let the blender run for about 2 minutes. Strain the soup through a fine mesh strainer, pressing on the solids to extract all of the liquid. Discard the solids. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. The soup should have enough

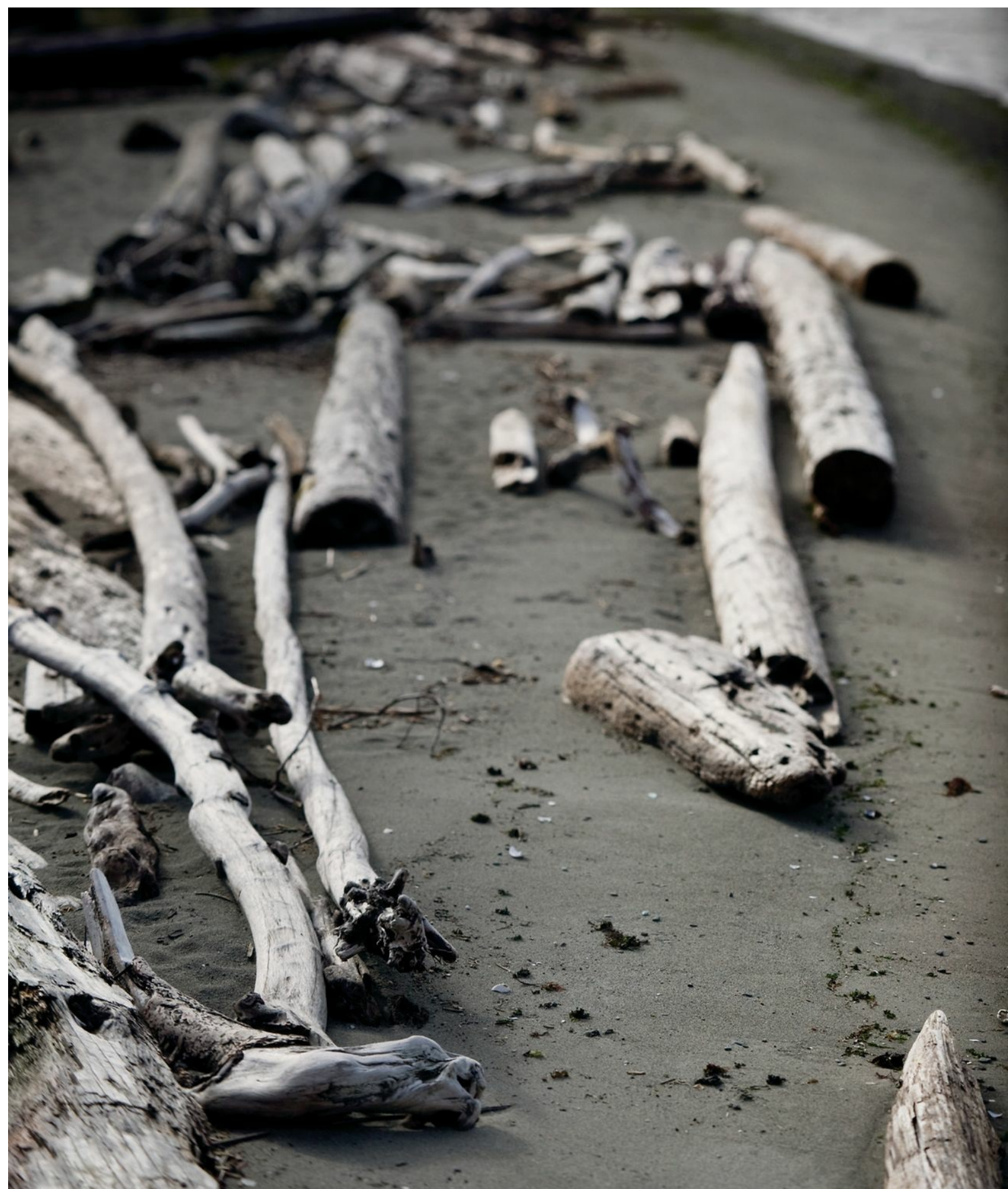
saltiness, acidity from the lime, and a bit of a kick from the pepper and Tabasco. Chill the soup in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.

Double-check the crabmeat for any stray bits of shell, and reserve any nice, large crab pieces for garnish. Mix the 2 tablespoons chopped basil and 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro with the crabmeat and olive oil. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding a pinch of salt if necessary.

Serve the chilled soup in shallow bowls with a small amount of crab salad in the middle. Lean a few of the larger crabmeat pieces against the salad. Drizzle some of the reserved coconut cream around the edges (thin the coconut cream with a little water if necessary).

**PAIRING:** A Washington riesling, such as Chateau Ste. Michelle Eroica 2008, Columbia Valley, or a German Kabinett riesling.









**dungeness crab mac-and-cheese**



2 to 3 live Dungeness crabs, or  
about  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound crabmeat  
1 pound good-quality cheddar  
cheese (I like a mix of medium  
and sharp)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) unsalted butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup minced shallots  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour  
3 cups whole milk, cold  
2 fresh bay leaves, or 1 dried  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon regular or smoked  
paprika  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon saffron, mixed with  
1 tablespoon hot water  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon cayenne  
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard  
1 pound elbow or penne pasta  
1 cup panko  
1 tablespoon freshly grated  
lemon zest (about 1 large  
lemon)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup finely chopped fresh  
Italian parsley  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) unsalted butter,  
melted

*If you get the chance to go crabbing and have yourself a good day, you're going to be in the enviable position of having a ton of crabmeat on your hands. That is the perfect time to pull out this recipe. Everyone loves mac-and-cheese, but adding sweet crabmeat—that's just ridiculously awesome. My secret for making this dish extra flavorful is to cook the pasta in the same water as I cooked the crab. As the pasta cooks, it absorbs the crab "stock," which then flavors the pasta from within.*

SERVES 4 TO 6

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with butter. Fill the sink with ice water.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the crabs. Once the water has returned to a boil, cook the crabs for 14 to 18 minutes. (Cook crabs that weigh around 2 pounds each, as most do, for about 14 minutes. Increase the cooking time by a few minutes if your crabs are larger.) While they cook, grate the cheddar and set aside. Using a pair of sturdy tongs, pull the crabs out of the cooking water and chill them in the ice water. Strain the crab cooking water through a colander, return it to the pot, and return to a boil.

In a large saucepan over medium-low heat, melt the butter and add the shallots. Cook for 1 minute. Whisk in the flour gradually and reduce the heat to low. Keep cooking and stirring the roux until it starts to smell nutty, about 5 minutes. Gradually add the milk while continuing to stir. Increase the heat to medium high and add the bay leaves, paprika, saffron, tomato paste, cayenne, and mustard. Simmer gently until the sauce is slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Add the reserved cheese and cook until it has melted into the sauce. Taste for seasoning, then cover and set aside while you clean and crack the crabs.<sup>14</sup>

Cook the pasta in the strained crab cooking water until it is al dente, drain, and transfer to a bowl. Stir the pasta and crabmeat into the sauce. Put this heart-stoppingly delicious concoction into the baking dish.

In a medium bowl, mix the panko with the lemon zest, parsley, and melted butter. Top the pasta with the panko mixture and bake for about 30 minutes, or until the mac-and-cheese is bubbly and browned on the top.

**PAIRING:** A California chardonnay, such as Lioco 2007, Sonoma County, or a white Burgundy.



### **dungeness crab with bacon-cider sauce**

1 pound Dungeness crabmeat  
4 strips good-quality bacon,  
cut into small dice  
1 apple, such as Gala or Granny  
Smith, sliced horizontally into  
four 1/3-inch slices through the  
core (remove the seeds with  
the tip of a knife, leaving the  
pretty star pattern)  
1/3 cup small-diced onion  
Pinch of salt  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
1/3 cup clam juice  
1/4 cup apple juice or cider  
Heaping 1/4 teaspoon freshly

ground pepper  
1 teaspoon minced fresh lemon  
thyme or regular thyme  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 teaspoon minced fresh  
tarragon  
Cayenne (optional)  
Maldon sea salt, for garnish  
(optional)

*This is a sophisticated dish that I pull out in the fall as a first course to impress my family from back East, especially when they start in on the “blue crab is better than Dungeness” rhetoric. If you live in the Pacific Northwest, it is highly likely that you can make this dish with ingredients raised or grown very close to home: world-famous Washington apples and cider, Pacific Dungeness, and locally cured bacon.*

SERVES 6 AS AN APPETIZER

Double-check the crabmeat for any stray bits of shell. Place it in a medium bowl over another bowl partially filled with very hot tap water. Locate 4 nice, large leg pieces to use as a garnish and set aside. Cover the top bowl. After 5 minutes, give the crabmeat a gentle stir. You want it to be room temperature or slightly warm when you serve the dish.

In a small skillet over medium-high heat, add the bacon. Cook the bacon until its fat is rendered and it is crisp, about 10 minutes. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate and set aside, reserving the fat. Pour the bacon fat through a fine mesh strainer into a cup. Clean the skillet and place it back on the stove over medium-high heat. Add the bacon fat back to the skillet and, when it is hot, carefully slip the apples into the pan. Fry them until one side is nicely caramelized, 3 to 4 minutes; then flip and cook them for 30 seconds more. Transfer them to a plate and keep warm.

Without cleaning the skillet, add the onions and salt, and cook over medium-high heat, scraping up any stuck-on bits. Cook until the onions are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the white wine, clam juice, and apple juice. Add the pepper and lemon thyme. Bring the sauce to a boil and reduce by half, about 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat, then swirl in the butter, tarragon, and cayenne. Taste and check for seasoning.

Serve each person a quarter of the crabmeat, placing it in the center of a warm plate. Place an apple slice (caramelized side up) to one side, leaning on the pile of crabmeat. Drizzle the sauce over the crab and apple, and garnish with some reserved bacon pieces and one piece of the reserved leg meat. Finish with a sprinkle of Maldon sea salt.

**PAIRING:** A Savennières, such as Château Pierre-Bise 2007, Loire Valley, France, or an Alsatian pinot gris.









# *Linc's* FISHING TACKLE



# shrimp

**When I was just a wee lass,** I had a thing bad for shrimp cocktail. This habit started when I was 6 or so—an age that required me to kneel on my seat at my family’s favorite local restaurant to reach the shrimp that perched on the sides of a soda fountain glass. I remember how cold and frosty that glass was; how the ice cupped a thimbleful of cocktail sauce in the middle; how five plump shrimp fanned out from the center like the orange-pink petals of a rare flower.

I feel wistful about those cheap and easy shrimp cocktails, those family meals that seemed to be devoid of the modern conversations about food that are fairly commonplace today. Being an ethical eater sometimes gives me an adult-size headache and a penchant for sounding like an old fogie who starts sentences with, “Remember when . . . ?” I no longer eat shrimp in the numbers I used to. I’ve learned to anticipate—with joy—the seasons for food.

Thirty-some-odd years later, with the feeling of the wooden chair on my knees and the smell of lemon still etched in my nasal passages, I find myself at the docks in Anacortes, Washington, where I happen upon some live spot prawns being sold off a local boat. The sun is shining and the striped and spotted orange prawns are lookers, stunning against the blue sky. I hang my legs over the side of the dock and twist off the shrimp heads, thanking each one for its life. My excitement builds as I plan a menu—I’m thinking some cocktail sauce, a lemon, a tall frosty glass, some crushed ice. Yes, that feels about right.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** Pacific Coast shrimp, generally speaking, are well managed, sustainable, and abundant. Shrimp grow very fast, produce many young in their short life spans, and have catch limits set by fishery managers. Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch lists Oregon pink shrimp and B.C. spot prawns as “Best Choices,” and the Oregon pink shrimp fishery is certified sustainable according to the Marine Stewardship Council.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Pink shrimp (*Pandalus jordani*) are the tiny guys, no bigger than your thumbnail. They are also marketed as Oregon pink shrimp or cocktail shrimp, and are sometimes called bay shrimp, ocean shrimp, or salad shrimp. Spot prawns (*Pandalus platyceros*) are sometimes called spot shrimp, sonamed for the distinctive white spots on the prawns’ abdomens. There are two very similar species of shrimp—called sidestripe (*Pandalopsis dispar*) and coon-stripe (*Pandalus hypsinotis*)—that are often caught along with spot prawns and sometimes marketed erroneously under that name. All, regardless of name, are considered sustainable.

**SEASON:** Pink shrimp are in season from April through October in Oregon and Washington, but they most often come to market cooked, peeled, and frozen. Spot prawns are in season in the spring and summer in British Columbia, and can generally be found in Washington from May through August, though you can find frozen spot prawns year-round, especially through online sources.

**BUYING TIPS:** If you are buying your shrimp or prawns frozen or previously frozen, make sure

there is no sign of freezer burn (little white or dry-looking patches). Live spot prawns are a treat and a treasure: snap them up if you see them. Pink shrimp and spot prawns are not sold in the “count per pound” size designations you often see when purchasing other shrimp and prawn varieties at fish counters (such as 21 to 25 for large, or 31 to 35 for medium). You will find pink shrimp and spot prawns listed instead by the price per pound alone.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET** What species is this and where was it caught? Look for pink shrimp from Oregon or Washington and spot prawns from Washington or British Columbia.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** Pink shrimp are often purchased frozen and can remain in your freezer for up to 6 months. They defrost very rapidly. I like to defrost them on paper towels since they tend to retain some water. Spot prawns can be purchased frozen or fresh (heads removed), or live. Thaw spot prawns under cool running water or over a drip pan in the refrigerator. If you purchase live spot prawns, you should remove their heads as soon as possible, as an enzymatic process will make the meat mushy if the heads remain on once the prawns have died. They are sometimes sold with their bright orange eggs attached; I like to stir the eggs into a pasta sauce at the last moment for a little crunch and texture.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** Pink shrimp are caught by trawling. Although trawling is often a destructive process, this fishery trawls midwater instead of on the seafloor and is therefore generally recognized as less damaging to the environment. Also, the trawl net has a bycatch reduction device that keeps other species from getting into the net. Spot prawns are caught with traps, which have low bycatch issues and minimal negative impacts on habitat.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** Domestic farmed white shrimp, because they are grown in closed-containment systems, make a good, though not ideal, substitute for spot prawns. (They are sweeter than white shrimp.) I find that scallops and prawns are interchangeable up to a point, and similarly, I think big chunks of crabmeat could stand in as a possible substitute. Whether fresh or frozen, it is best to purchase shrimp from the United States. U.S. fisheries managers are making efforts to keep the catch sustainable and find solutions to bycatch issues. We don’t have these assurances for imported shrimp and can’t be guaranteed that the environmental standards or social justice issues for the workers who farm or fish for shrimp in other countries are adequate.

### **oregon pink shrimp salad with mint**

2 tablespoons freshly  
squeezed lime juice  
(1 medium lime)  
2 tablespoons freshly



squeezed grapefruit juice  
(½ small grapefruit)  
1 teaspoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
1 teaspoon hot chile sauce,  
such as *sriracha*<sup>15</sup>  
⅛ teaspoon salt, plus extra  
for salting the grapefruit  
1 teaspoon sugar  
½ pound Oregon pink shrimp  
1 small carrot, grated (¼ cup)  
¼ cup chopped cilantro stems  
and leaves  
1 avocado, peeled, pitted,  
and cut into medium dice  
1 tablespoon peanut or other  
high-heat vegetable oil  
⅓ cup thinly sliced shallots  
1 grapefruit (Texas Ruby Red,  
if available)  
4 large butter lettuce leaves  
¼ cup roughly chopped dry-  
roasted, salted peanuts, for  
garnish  
¼ cup loosely packed fresh  
mint leaves, stacked and cut  
into thin ribbons, for garnish

*I used to teach a culinary program to new Vietnamese immigrants. Some of my students were painfully shy, so, to boost their confidence, I would have them teach the rest of the class a simple family recipe in English. I got a lovely education in Vietnamese regional cuisine just as surely as my students learned how to read and write recipes and work in a commercial kitchen. This dish reflects my love of the herbs and fresh vegetables in Vietnamese cooking, where the protein is used more as a garnish than as the entire focus of the meal. Feel free to spice it up by adding some minced garlic and jalapeño.*

SERVES 4

In a large bowl, mix the lime juice, grapefruit juice, soy sauce, fish sauce, chile sauce, salt, and sugar. Add the shrimp, carrots, cilantro, and avocado. Mix well and let the shrimp marinate for 20 minutes in the refrigerator.

In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, add the peanut oil. Add the shallots and cook until they are caramelized, about 10 minutes. Let them cool and then add them to the shrimp mixture.

Cut the peel off the grapefruit, making sure to remove any of the white bitter pith from the flesh. Slice

the grapefruit horizontally into ½-inch rounds and remove any seeds. Then slice them into ½-inch-wide strips, and finally, cut them crosswise into medium cubes. Salt the cubes lightly and set aside. Place the lettuce leaves on a large platter. Spoon the grapefruit and then the shrimp mixture evenly over the leaves, drizzling excess marinade all around the platter. Garnish with the peanuts and mint.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Kim Crawford 2009, Marlborough, New Zealand, or a Sancerre.





**weeknight linguine with spot prawns and basil**

Kosher salt  
1 pound fresh or dried linguine  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
½ cup pitted kalamata olives  
¼ cup capers, chopped  
¼ cup dry white vermouth or  
dry white wine  
2 fresh tomatoes, cut into  
medium dice, or two canned  
tomatoes, cut into medium  
dice, plus ½ cup of the juice  
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh  
basil, plus some small leaves  
for garnish  
1 pound spot prawns, peeled  
and deveined<sup>16</sup>  
Zest of 1 lemon (about 2  
teaspoons)  
Freshly ground pepper  
2 ounces goat cheese (optional)

*Legend has it that pasta puttanesca was a quick bite for busy “ladies of the evening” in Naples, Italy. This dish is based on a classic puttanesca but takes it in a slightly different direction by including our Pacific Coast spot prawns and the bright note of lemon zest. One of my favorite ways to dress this recipe up a bit is by adding goat cheese. Every lady needs a good accessory now and again.*

SERVES 4

Set a large pasta pot filled with water over high heat. When the water boils, add 1 tablespoon salt. Add the pasta and cook until it is al dente. Drain in a colander, reserving ½ cup of the pasta cooking liquid. Set the pasta aside, shaking it from time to time to keep it from sticking.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, add the olive oil. After a minute, add the garlic, red pepper flakes, olives, and capers, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring, to flavor the oil. Carefully add the vermouth, stirring to loosen any bits clinging to the pan. Add the tomatoes with juice and cook for 2 to 3 minutes more. If the sauce is dry, add a touch of the reserved pasta cooking water. Add the basil, prawns, lemon zest, and reserved pasta, and cook, tossing, for 2 more minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with the goat cheese and basil leaves.

**PAIRING:** A pinot grigio, such as Jermann 2008, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy, or a grüner veltliner.





**grilled spot prawns with “crack salad”**



For the crack salad:

1 underripe (still firm) mango,  
peeled, pitted, and cut into  
small dice

½ medium English cucumber,  
peel on, deseeded, and cut  
into ¼-inch half moons (about  
2 cups)

1 Fresno chile pepper,  
deseeded and minced, or ¼  
red bell pepper, cut into small  
dice (optional)

⅓ cup dry-roasted, salted  
peanuts

⅓ cup chopped cilantro stems  
and leaves

¼ cup Thai sweet chile sauce,  
such as Mae Ploy brand<sup>17</sup>

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed  
lime juice (about ½ lime)

¼ cup unsweetened coconut,  
toasted (optional)

For the grilled spot prawns:

½ pound raw shell-on or live  
spot prawns

High-heat vegetable oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Skewers (if using wooden skew-  
ers, presoak them in water for  
1 hour)

*One reason I've never wanted to run a restaurant is that your customers get very attached to certain dishes and raise holy hell if you want to change the menu on them. I thought, therefore, as a private chef, I'd be free to change it up on my whim. That was, until my clients had this dish, henceforth known as "crack salad" for its addictiveness. I'm not sure what it is exactly, but young and old, adventurous eaters and picky eaters, everyone loves this dish.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the salad, combine all of its ingredients in a large bowl. Set aside.

To prepare the prawns, preheat an outdoor gas grill or an indoor grill pan to high heat. If you are working with live spot prawns, put them in the freezer for 30 minutes to numb them.

Season the prawns generously with vegetable oil, salt, and pepper. Skewer them using 2 skewers

spaced 1 inch apart (this keeps the prawns from spinning around and holds them flat), or spear individual prawns lengthwise (as in the photograph, opposite). Grill the prawns for about 2 minutes on each side, or until lightly charred.

Serve the grilled prawns over the crack salad and provide lots of napkins.

**PAIRING:** A riesling, such as Albert Mann Riesling Cuvee Albert 2006, Alsace, France; a pinot gris; or a cold light beer.

### **tom yum goong (spicy shrimp and lemongrass soup)**

2 tablespoons peanut or other  
high-heat vegetable oil  
1 medium onion, cut into small  
dice (about 1 cup)  
½ small carrot, cut into small  
dice (about ⅓ cup)  
2 ribs celery, cut into small  
dice  
1 pound shrimp, peeled and  
deveined,<sup>20</sup> shells reserved  
5 to 6 cups water  
3 tomatoes, cut into medium  
dice, or 1 (14-ounce) can  
diced tomatoes with their  
juice  
6 Kaffir lime leaves,<sup>18</sup> or zest of  
1 lime (about 1 teaspoon)  
6 thin slices peeled fresh  
galangal<sup>19</sup> or ginger  
2 jalapeños, halved (remove  
seeds and membranes if you  
desire a milder soup)  
½ cup sliced shallots  
3 stalks lemongrass, woody  
top half discarded, cut into  
1-inch pieces  
3 ounces cremini or button  
mushrooms, sliced ½-inch  
thick (about 1 cup)  
3 tablespoons fish sauce  
3 tablespoons freshly  
squeezed lime juice (about  
2 limes)

Salt  
Whole cilantro leaves, for  
garnish

*I was lucky enough to spend a month touring Thailand, eating my way through trains, outdoor markets, hole-in-the-wall wok stands, and little tucked-away places. What stands out for me is the way Thai cuisine is perfectly balanced between salty, sweet, sour, spicy, and bitter. The food in Thailand can be very hot. The weather in Thailand can be very hot. One thing that is not so hot in Thailand is a perspiring, red-faced woman like myself in need of rice to put out the fire in my mouth from the tom yum goong. This version has been rated WGS: white girl safe.*

SERVES 4

Set a stockpot over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the peanut oil, and when it is hot, add the onion, carrot, and celery. Sauté for 5 minutes, or until lightly browned. Turn the heat to high, add the shrimp shells, and sauté until they are lightly browned, about 2 minutes (browning the shells at high heat gives the shrimp stock its distinctive flavor). Add the water to the pot (if you are using canned tomatoes, pour off the juice, measure it, then add enough water to total 6 cups). Add the Kaffir lime leaves, galangal, and jalapeños and bring to a boil. Scrape up any browned bits at the bottom of the pot. Simmer gently for 30 minutes.

Strain the stock through a fine mesh sieve and set aside. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon peanut oil in the stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and lemongrass and sauté until lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Add the mushrooms, tomatoes, and reserved stock. Bring the soup to a gentle boil, reduce to a simmer, and add the fish sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes. Add the shrimp and turn off the heat (the residual heat will fully cook the shrimp).

Add the lime juice. Season to taste with salt, and add more fish sauce if necessary. It's very important to taste the soup at this point and make sure it is balanced. If it is flat, add more lime juice. A bit of sugar or honey can balance any excess tartness, spiciness, or bitterness.

Serve the soup garnished with cilantro leaves. Tell your guests that they can chew on the lemongrass but should not eat it.

**PAIRING:** A gewürztraminer, such as Paul Kubler "K" 2007, Alsace, France, or a viognier.

### **shrimp with tangerine powder and smoked chile aioli**

For the tangerine powder:

4 tangerines

1 tablespoon sugar

For the smoked chile aioli:

1 egg yolk

¼ teaspoon chipotle powder<sup>21</sup>

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 clove garlic, minced

⅛ teaspoon salt



½ cup pure olive oil or neutral vegetable oil (don't use extra-virgin olive oil, as it can make the sauce bitter)  
Freshly ground pepper

For the marinade:

Reserved tangerine flesh from the peeled tangerines  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon salt  
⅛ teaspoon chipotle powder

For the shrimp:

1 pound sidestripe or spot prawns, peeled (leaving shells on tails) and deveined<sup>22</sup>  
1 tablespoon high-heat vegetable oil

*There are two components of this recipe that put it into the “challenging” category: the tangerine powder and the aioli. However, neither is terribly difficult if you carefully follow the directions. A from-scratch aioli (essentially a garlic-laced mayonnaise) flavored with smoked chile powder is a wonderful ingredient to have in your bag. The tangerine powder (essentially the dehydrated ground peels of several tangerines) is a little bit of orange pixie dust that has numerous uses, besides being an unusual and surprising flavor for shrimp: try it sprinkled on a plum tart, in a steaming mug of milk-laced Earl Grey tea, or folded into shortbread or scone dough.*

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER

Preheat the oven to 275°F.

To prepare the powder, peel the tangerines, reserving the flesh to use in the marinade. Remove any of the bitter white pith from the peels. Place the peels on a baking sheet and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, watching carefully to make sure they don't brown. Check them often and flip them over a few times; you want them to crisp up and dry out without burning them. Once the peels are crisp, let them cool and then grind them with the sugar in a spice grinder to a fine powder. Set aside in a small bowl.

To prepare the aioli, in the small bowl of a food processor, add the egg yolk, chipotle powder, lemon juice, garlic, and salt. Slowly drizzle the olive oil into the food processor while the machine is running. (If you don't have a food processor, you can make the aioli by hand in a medium bowl, whisking the yolk mixture constantly as you slowly drip the olive oil into the bowl.) Season to taste with pepper, adding extra lemon juice and salt if necessary. Transfer the aioli to a small bowl.

To prepare the marinade, squeeze the tangerine flesh until you have ½ cup juice. Strain to remove any seeds or pith. Add the juice to a small saucepan and reduce over high heat until you have about 2

tablespoons. Set aside to cool. In a small bowl, combine the olive oil, salt, chipotle powder, and tangerine reduction.

To prepare the shrimp, soak them in the marinade for 20 minutes.

Heat a cast-iron skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil. When the pan and oil are really hot, pan-fry the shrimp for about 1 minute on each side, or until they are browned.

Serve the shrimp in a large bowl. Instruct your guests to dip the shrimp into the aioli and then sprinkle with tangerine powder.

**PAIRING:** A white Bordeaux, such as Château de Fongrave Blanc 2008, or a New Zealand sauvignon blanc.





**scallops**



***If cooking seafood perfectly*** is the measure of a cook's skill, the scallop is a good measuring stick. Of all the things I've taught as a cooking instructor, it is the craft of perfectly searing a scallop that has most enthralled my students. No other seafood quite achieves its delicious duplicity: crispy, caramelized, sweet exterior meets creamy, silky, oceany interior.

In the male-dominated world of restaurant kitchens that I inhabited before venturing out on my own, I often found myself being measured up as I lowered scallops down into a smoking hot pan. Did I wince or cry out as hot drops of fat met the delicate skin of my forearm? Did I place the scallops too close together so that wisps of steam rose from the pan and attracted the glare of my sous chef? Did my lips curl into a very subtle smirk when I flipped the scallops over with a flick of the wrist to reveal, thankfully, a tawny brown glistening crust? You bet.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** Sea scallops are filter feeders just like clams, mussels, and oysters; this process contributes to better water quality. Look for farmed Qualicum scallops from British Columbia. Like all farmed shellfish, scallops depend on clean waters to thrive, and as a result, shellfish farmers are often at the forefront of clean water advocacy initiatives. Weathervane scallops from Alaska are a second choice because they are harvested by mechanical dredge, which carries with it some habitat concerns that need to be more fully researched.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Qualicum scallops (or "Qualicums") are a hybrid developed by Island Scallops Ltd. from the weathervane scallop (*Patinopecten caurinus*) and the Japanese scallop (*Patinopecten yessoensis*).

**SEASON:** Farmed scallops are available year-round (though they spawn from April to May). Weathervane scallop season in Alaska is from July through September, although very high-quality frozen weathervanes are available year-round.

**BUYING TIPS:** Some lesser scallops are soaked in sodium tripolyphosphate (STP), which can be used—or rather, abused—to minimize water loss when thawing frozen scallops. When applied to fresh scallops in excess, the scallops will take up extra moisture; more water equals diluted flavor and fewer scallops per pound. Buy "dry-packed" or "chemical-free," which is industry-speak for an unadulterated scallop. Dry-packed scallops will range from white to off-white to cream-colored: all are acceptable. Ask to smell the scallops: they should have a light, sweet ocean smell or hardly any at all. You'll find scallops sold in "count per pound" size designations. For example, large scallops are 10 to 20 per pound; medium scallops number 20 to 30 per pound. Of course, you'll pay more per pound for the larger scallops. For most of the recipes in this book, the size of the scallop doesn't matter. I only specify "large" in one recipe because using a single scallop for each serving is visually appealing.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** After asking where and when the scallops were harvested, the most important question is whether they are fresh or were previously frozen. I ask this question only because if I end up not using all the scallops that day, I will



freeze some raw ones to use at a later date, but only if they haven't already been frozen (too many freezing and thawing cycles will destroy the texture).

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** Unwrap your scallops when you get them home. Place them on a paper-towel-lined plate and cover well with plastic wrap. Use them that day or the next. Remove the part of the adductor muscle that is sometimes still attached to the scallop, as it gets very tough when cooked. In the video about scallops at [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com), I show you what this piece looks like and how to remove it.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Wild scallops can actually swim, pumping their adductor muscle to escape prey or move to a different area. They prefer to hang out in sand, gravel, and rock bottoms. Commercially farmed scallops are raised in net cages that are hung in the water column offshore. The scallops go from hatchery to harvest in 18 to 24 months.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Crab and shrimp are good substitutes for scallops.





**scallop crudo**



½ pound sea scallops (see A  
Note on Eating Raw Seafood  
on page 235)  
1 large orange  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
Pinch of red pepper flakes  
1 tablespoon chopped  
pumpkin seeds or pistachios,  
for garnish  
4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh  
mint, for garnish  
Maldon or gray sea salt

*Crudo is an Italian dish of raw fish dressed with olive oil, citrus, and sea salt. The beauty of a good crudo lies in its ability to preserve the subtlety of the fish flavor and bring out its richness with good olive oil while simultaneously balancing it with acid—in this case, orange juice. The best crudos have a textural component: here I use chopped bits of pumpkin seed and crunchy crystals of Maldon sea salt (worth seeking out at a specialty market or online if you've never had it).*

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER

Place the scallops in a resealable plastic bag and freeze for 20 minutes to allow for easier slicing. Zest the orange (you will have about 2½ tablespoons of zest). Cut a ⅛-inch horizontal slice from the middle of the orange. Trim off the remaining pith, then cut the orange flesh into small dice. Set aside. Squeeze the remaining orange to yield ⅓ cup juice.

In a small saucepan over high heat, bring the orange juice, orange zest, lemon juice, and red pepper flakes to a boil. Cook the mixture until it reduces to a syrup (about 2 tablespoons remaining), about 3 minutes. Pour through a fine mesh strainer, pressing on the zest to release its oil into the syrup. Discard the solids and allow the syrup to cool.

Toast the pumpkin seeds in a small skillet over high heat, stirring constantly, until they smell toasted and darken in color, about 2 minutes.

Using a very sharp, thin-bladed slicing knife, cut the scallops horizontally (against the grain) into ⅛-inch slices. Arrange the slices decoratively on 4 small plates. Spoon equal amounts of the syrup over the scallops. Drizzle approximately 1 teaspoon of the olive oil over each portion. Garnish with a sprinkling of pumpkin seeds, reserved diced orange, and mint. Carefully distribute a small pinch of Maldon salt over the scallop slices. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as DiStefano 2008, Columbia Valley, Washington, or an Australian riesling.



# TIPS FOR SEARING PERFECT CARAMELIZED SCALLOPS

1. Dry your scallops well on a paper towel before searing. A wet scallop will spurt and steam in the pan and take longer to caramelize. Remove the small adductor muscle if it is still attached to the scallop (it gets tough when cooked).
2. Use a pan that conducts heat well; I use a cast-iron skillet. Don't use a nonstick pan because it is not made for high-heat use and doesn't caramelize protein very well.
3. Heat your pan over high heat. (Now, many of you will read that, defy me, and turn your heat down to medium high. Trust me, and get your hand off that dial.) Add about 1 tablespoon high-heat vegetable oil. When the oil is very hot, carefully add your scallops, tipping them away from you to minimize splattering oil. If you need to shriek when you do this, so be it.
4. Make sure to allow plenty of room between each scallop; cook them in batches if necessary. Crowded scallops will inhibit the evaporation of moisture and limit caramelization.
5. Very important: At this step, do nothing. Don't move the scallops. Don't touch them. Don't even look at them. Scallops will need at least 2 minutes of contact on this side with that hot pan to create good color (and therefore flavor).
6. After 2 minutes, carefully take the tip of a metal spatula and lift up a corner of a scallop so you can peek beneath it. If you've had problems with sticking in the past, either try a different pan or wait a bit longer (the protein will literally release itself from the pan most of the time if you've waited long enough and not panicked and gone in there with four spatulas and a crowbar). Do you see a pale, anemic scallop, or are you saying "Hello, beautiful"? If the former, wait a bit longer; if the latter, gently tease the scallop off the bottom of the pan and flip it over.
7. What you do next depends on your likes and dislikes. I cook my scallops, if they are somewhat large (at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch tall), for only 1 minute on the opposite side (only 30 seconds if they are smaller). I like my scallops crusty and brown on the top and medium rare in the middle. If you've never tried a scallop this way, please do. It will literally taste like a different type of seafood compared to a well-done scallop—a better, more lovely type of seafood.
8. Transfer the scallops to a plate. Stand back and admire your handiwork.

If you're the visual type, go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) to see me demonstrate proper technique for handling and searing scallops.

## scallops, grits, and greens

For the greens:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive  
oil



1 bunch kale, stems removed,  
leaves chopped into bite-  
size pieces  
1 bunch mustard greens,  
stems removed, leaves  
chopped into bite-size  
pieces  
Pinch of red pepper flakes  
¼ teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons honey  
1 tablespoon apple cider  
vinegar  
½ cup chicken or pork stock

For the grits:  
2 cups whole milk  
2 cups chicken or pork stock  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ cup quick-cooking grits or  
polenta  
1 cup (about 2 ounces) grated  
cheddar cheese  
1 teaspoon orange zest

For the scallops:  
1 pound sea scallops  
1 tablespoon ancho chile  
powder<sup>23</sup> (or chile powder of  
your choice)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

*You've probably heard of shrimp and grits, but what about scallops and grits? I wondered why I'd never thought of this dish or eaten it before. The sweet, caramelized scallop crust with a buttery soft interior mirrors the creaminess of the cheesy grits combined with earthy, spicy greens mellowed with honey. Turns out that this dish is a culinary oversight needing immediate rectification.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the greens, in a large pot over medium-high heat, add all of its ingredients. Stir well, cover, and cook for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the greens are tender. Taste for seasoning and adjust as needed. Keep warm.

To prepare the grits, in a large saucepan over high heat, add the milk, chicken stock, and salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer. Gradually whisk in the grits. Reduce the heat to medium low and stir the grits for 5 minutes, or until they are creamy and tender. Stir in the cheddar and orange zest. Keep warm.

To prepare the scallops, dry them with paper towels. Place them on a plate and season with the chile powder, salt, and pepper. Heat a heavy skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is really hot, carefully add the scallops to the pan, being careful not to splatter oil on yourself or crowd the pan with too many scallops. Cook the scallops for 2 minutes on one side without disturbing them, or until they are caramelized, then flip, cooking the other side for only a minute or so more.

To serve, scoop the grits onto a platter or plates. Top with the greens and scallops.

**PAIRING:** You *must* drink Red Stripe Jamaican lager with this dish.







**scallops with carrot cream and marjoram**



For the carrot cream:

½ pound carrots, cut into large  
dice (about 2 cups)  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ cup cream  
Freshly ground pepper

For the pickled carrots:

1 large carrot, sliced into short  
ribbons using a vegetable  
peeler (about 1 cup)  
¼ cup seasoned rice wine  
vinegar

For the scallops:

1 pound sea scallops  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

For serving:

2 tablespoons Herb Oil (recipe  
follows)  
1 teaspoon marjoram leaves,  
for garnish

*About ten years ago, at Tulio Ristorante in downtown Seattle, I had a memorable pasta dish featuring the herb marjoram; it was just a small, fragrant amount tossed with butter and fresh pasta, but so many years later I can still smell its perfume. Oregano's sexier sister, as marjoram is sometimes called, is also a favorite of Jerry Traunfeld, former executive chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant, who taught me to combine it with carrots. There is something about the earthy sweetness of carrots paired with the delicate pine notes of marjoram that really works. The addition of sweet, briny scallops to that already solid combination blows this dish right out of the water.*

**SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER**

To prepare the carrot cream, add the carrots and salt to a medium saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook for 7 to 8 minutes, or until the carrots are tender. Drain the carrots and add them to a blender along with the cream and a pinch of pepper to taste. Blend until the mixture is a very smooth purée and set aside.

To prepare the pickled carrots, in a medium bowl, toss the carrots with the rice wine vinegar. Marinate the carrots for at least 20 minutes. Drain, reserving the vinegar for another use, and set aside.

To prepare the scallops, dry them with paper towels. Place them on a plate and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is really hot, carefully add the scallops to the pan, being careful not to splatter oil on yourself or crowd the pan with too many scallops. Cook the scallops for 2 minutes on one side without disturbing them, or until they are caramelized, then flip, cooking the other side for only a minute or so more.

To assemble the dish, gently reheat the carrot cream, then spoon some on each of 4 plates. Top each plate with several scallops. Drizzle some Herb Oil around the scallops and garnish with a sprinkling of pickled carrots and marjoram leaves.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Château Leredde Sancerre Blanc 2007, Sancerre, France, or a Chablis.

## ***HERB OIL***

¾ cup packed fresh Italian  
parsley leaves  
1 tablespoon fresh marjoram  
leaves  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ cup neutral vegetable oil,  
such as canola or safflower  
Pinch of salt

*This recipe is infinitely flexible; many times I make it with basil and parsley. The reason I use both olive oil and a neutral oil is that sometimes the olive oil can dominate or make the oil a little bitter. The neutral oil allows the flavor of the herbs to shine, while the addition of some olive oil rounds out the flavor.*

MAKES ABOUT ¾ CUP

In a blender, combine the parsley, marjoram, olive oil, vegetable oil, and salt. Blend until the oil turns a vibrant green color, about 3 minutes. You can strain the oil through a fine-mesh strainer if you'd like or leave it with some texture. Transfer the oil to a bowl, or if you'd like to be all fancy-pants, feel free to transfer it to a squeeze bottle.

### **summer scallops with corn soup**

For the olive salad:

¼ cup pitted kalamata olives,  
minced  
10 Castelvetrano or other fruity  
green olives, pitted and sliced

into thin strips  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh  
Italian parsley  
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon Herb Oil (see page  
90)  
Freshly ground pepper

For the corn soup:  
10 ounces frozen corn kernels,  
thawed, or 2 cups fresh corn  
kernels (cut from about 2  
large ears of corn)  
1 cup clam juice, warmed  
1 teaspoon unsalted butter  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
Honey (optional)

For the tomato bread:  
1 baguette  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tomato, cut into four ¼-inch  
slices, the rest cut into small  
dice  
Sea salt

For the scallops:  
12 sea scallops  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 tablespoons high-heat  
vegetable oil

For serving:  
2 tablespoons Herb Oil (page  
90)  
2 tablespoons chile oil (found  
in the Asian foods aisle of  
large supermarkets)

*Do not be deceived into thinking this dish is difficult to make because of its many components. Each part is extremely simple, and the result is a symphony of summer flavors: sweet corn; juicy, meaty tomatoes; the world's best fruit—the olive; and buttery scallops. All of it served with crusty, tomato-juice-soaked, toasted bread and two bright, piquant oils. This is the dish I would take with me to a desert island.*



SERVES 4

To prepare the olive salad, in a small bowl, combine the olives, parsley, red wine vinegar, and Herb Oil. Season to taste with pepper and set aside.

To prepare the corn soup, if you are using fresh corn, fill a small saucepan with salted water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, fill a medium bowl with ice water. When the water is boiling, add the corn. Cook until it is barely cooked through but still tender, about 2 minutes. Transfer the corn to a colander, drain, and then plunge it into the ice bath. When cool, drain through a colander.

In a blender combine the corn, clam juice, and butter until smooth (you can then pass the soup through a fine-mesh strainer if you want a more luxurious texture). Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add some honey if you feel the soup needs a bit more sweetness. Set aside and keep warm until ready to assemble dish.

Preheat the broiler. Place a rack in the top third of the oven.

To prepare the tomato bread, slice the baguette into eight 1-inch-thick slices. (Freeze the remaining baguette for another day.) Brush each slice with some olive oil. Spread the slices on a baking sheet and broil the bread until it is lightly brown on one side, 1 to 2 minutes (keep a close eye on it!). Remove from the oven and, using a fork, press the diced tomato onto the browned sides of the bread slices. Sprinkle each with a little sea salt. Reserve the tomato slices for when you assemble the dish.

To prepare the scallops, dry them with paper towels. Place them on a plate and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is really hot, carefully add the scallops to the pan, being careful not to splatter oil on yourself or crowd the pan with too many scallops. Cook the scallops for 2 minutes on one side without disturbing them, or until they are caramelized, then flip, cooking the other side for only a minute or so more. Set aside and keep warm until ready to assemble dish.

To assemble the dish, ladle some corn soup into each of 4 wide, shallow bowls. Lay a tomato slice sprinkled with a little salt in the middle of each bowl. Place 3 scallops around the tomato. Spoon some olive salad on top of each scallop. Drizzle ½ tablespoon Herb Oil and ½ tablespoon chile oil around the edges of the soup. Serve with the tomato bread.

**PAIRING:** A rosé from Tavel or Côtes du Rhône, such as M. Chapoutier “Belleruche” 2007, Côtes du Rhône, France, or a white Burgundy from Mâcon, France.

### **scallops with tarragon beurre blanc**

For the pea and asparagus purée:

4 ounces asparagus (5 to

7 spears), chopped, tips

reserved

¼ cup fresh or frozen peas

¼ cup fresh Italian parsley

leaves

3 tablespoons plain Greek-style

yogurt

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the tarragon beurre blanc:

1 teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon  
1 tablespoon minced shallot  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry white wine  
1 tablespoon champagne vinegar  
5 tablespoons cold unsalted butter

For the prosciutto, pea, and asparagus sauté:

1 ounce prosciutto, cut into small dice  
1 tablespoon minced shallot  
Reserved asparagus tips  
Reserved 1 tablespoon peas  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the scallops:

4 large (10 to 20 count) sea scallops, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces per scallop  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat vegetable oil

For serving:

1 teaspoon fresh tarragon leaves, as garnish

*I suppose this is the place where I could wax poetic about spring: the chartreuse profusions of new leaves and sweet, sweet peas and the majesty of asparagus. But I won't. You've heard all that before. What I'll say instead are two things: rich, creamy herbal butter and crispy prosciutto. Spring is great and all, but it's also a confusing time, when the weather is as bipolar as Sylvia Plath and you're not sure how to dress. This dish has one foot firmly in fatten-up wintertime and the other foot firmly in healthy, vegetal summertime, just like spring itself.*

Do-ahead tip: *The tarragon beurre blanc can be prepared the day before, without adding the*

*butter. Before serving, just reheat on the lowest setting and whisk in the butter. The pea and asparagus purée can be made the day before and warmed to serve.*

SERVES 4 AS A SMALL PLATE OR 2 AS A LIGHT ENTRÉE

To prepare the purée, chop the asparagus stems into 1-inch pieces. Fill a small saucepan with salted water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, fill a medium bowl with ice water. When the water is boiling, add the asparagus pieces. Cook until the pieces are barely cooked through but still tender, about 4 minutes. Remove them immediately with a slotted spoon and plunge into the ice bath. When the pieces have cooled, remove them from the ice bath.

If using fresh peas, blanch them for 1 minute in boiling salted water, then shock them in ice water, as described above. If using frozen, thaw them under cool running water and drain. Reserve 1 tablespoon peas for later use in the prosciutto, pea, and asparagus sauté.

In a blender, purée the blanched asparagus stems and peas, along with the parsley, yogurt, olive oil, and lemon juice, until smooth. Push the purée through a fine mesh strainer using a rubber spatula; season to taste with salt and pepper. Warm in a small saucepan before assembling the dish.

To prepare the beurre blanc, in a small saucepan over high heat, add the tarragon, shallot, white wine, and champagne vinegar. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until the liquid is reduced to just 1 tablespoon, 6 to 7 minutes. Turn the heat down to its lowest setting and whisk in the cold butter 1 tablespoon at a time, adding each only after the previous one has been incorporated. Taste for seasoning and then set the beurre blanc aside in a warm place. It will hold for about half an hour; if it should “break,” mix it in a blender for 1 minute to re-emulsify.

To prepare the vegetable sauté, in a sauté pan over medium heat, add the prosciutto. Cook the prosciutto until its fat is rendered and it starts to crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the shallots and asparagus tips and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes, or until the shallots are tender. Add the reserved peas. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside and keep warm.

To prepare the scallops, dry them with paper towels. Place them on a plate and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is really hot, carefully add the scallops to the pan, being careful not to splatter oil on yourself or crowd the pan with too many scallops. Cook the scallops for 3 minutes on one side without disturbing them, or until they are caramelized, then flip, cooking the other side for 2 minutes more. Set aside and keep warm until ready to assemble dish.

To assemble the dish, place a little pea and asparagus purée on each of 4 plates. Top with some of the prosciutto, pea, and asparagus sauté and a seared scallop. Pour some tarragon beurre blanc over the scallop. Garnish with tarragon leaves.

**PAIRING:** A grüner veltliner, such as F.X. Pichler Federspiel Loibner Frauenweingarten 2007, Wachau, Austria, or a white Bordeaux.

# FINFISH





**KING** / *CHINOOK*

**KING** / *CHINOOK*

**SOCKEYE** /

**COHO** / *SILVER*

**KETA** / *CHUM*

wild salmon

***In 2006 I ran the galley*** of a seventy-five-foot yacht headed up to Ketchikan, Alaska, by way of the Inside Passage. My sole motivation for taking this job—aside, of course, from the stunningly beautiful landscapes—was what I had hoped would be access to some of the freshest and most delicious seafood I’d ever laid my hands on. I was not disappointed.

The boat was a day outside Queen Charlotte Sound and its nauseatingly rolling sea. When we arrived at the Shearwater Marina, near Bella Bella, British Columbia, my sea legs were barely beneath me so the dock planks felt especially comforting. Matt, the marina manager, greeted me on the dock and quickly offered me a freshly caught twenty-pound king salmon that some sport fishermen had left them that day. By way of an answer, I jogged up the dock, trailing after him, a smile on my face like a delightfully simple-minded Labrador retriever. I remember holding that salmon tenderly to my chest, thanking him profusely, and coddling it the whole way back to the boat, grinning like an idiot.

I busily got to work cleaning, scaling, and cutting the salmon into portions that would fit in the boat’s refrigerator and freezer. I threw the backbone and tail over the side of the boat and watched as little fish instantaneously darted at it, taking their share as it slowly descended. I watched the bones sink until I could no longer see them and then caught up with the rest of the group. I smelled like a salmon. I couldn’t have been happier.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE** As of this writing, Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch lists all species of Alaska salmon as a “Best Choice.” All species of Alaska salmon are certified as sustainable fisheries according to the Marine Stewardship Council. Salmon from Washington are listed as a “Good Choice” by Seafood Watch, which means that there are some concerns with the fishery, but it is a good second choice if you can’t locate the best.

Wild salmon in the Lower 48 have encountered threats to their survival from habitat loss due to dams, pollution (runoff from agriculture and lawn chemicals, pollution from cars, etc.), and development. Introduced species, such as escaped farmed salmon, are another challenge to wild salmon. These species can affect reproductive rates, compete with wild salmon for spawning grounds, and spread diseases and parasites to the wild fish. These problems don’t affect Alaska wild salmon as significantly for two reasons: 1) the lower human population in Alaska means less impact on wild salmon and their habitats, and 2) Alaska does not allow salmon to be farmed in state waters.

The health of Alaskan salmon stocks is also a testament to good management practices. In the 1950s the Alaskan salmon fisheries collapsed from overfishing. In 1959 Alaska became a state and included guidelines in its constitution for the sustainable management of all its natural resources. Other Pacific Coast salmon fisheries have also reformed their management to reflect sustainable fishing practices; but more work needs to be done, as our land-based lives are in conflict with the pristine habitat salmon require to reproduce.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** I made up a mnemonic to remember the five salmon species: Can (chinook) Pink (pink) Salmon (sockeye) Cure (coho) Cancer (chum)?

Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), aka kings, springers, and tyee, are the largest of the salmon species (often more than 25 pounds, the record chinook weighed in at 146 pounds!) and the one with the most fat. Chinook salmon are beloved throughout the world. Like oysters that are often known by

the waters in which they grow, salmon differ in fat content and flavor depending on the rivers they were spawned in and what they ate on their way home to spawn. Copper River salmon is a well-known example of a fish marketed by its river's name. A rare genetic variation that affects only 1 percent of chinook causes its flesh to be white; the meat is sold as "white king" or "ivory king." Even rarer is the marbled chinook caught off the Washington coast. Try white or marbled chinook if you happen to see it.

I encourage you (as does your wallet), however, to explore the other four species of wild salmon. Think of chinook as you would a New York steak or filet mignon: best for occasional eating, whereas more reasonably priced cuts are great on a more regular basis. There is much to enjoy in a well-handled, fresh or carefully frozen pink, sockeye, coho, or chum salmon.

Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*), aka humpback or humpies, are the smallest of the salmon species (weighing from 3 to 12 pounds) and the most plentiful. They are typically sold in cans or smoked, though if you find them fresh, I encourage you to cook with the fillets. Keep in mind that pink salmon are lean and therefore less forgiving in the overcooking department.

Sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*), aka reds or blueback, average 6 to 9 pounds and have deep red flesh and thinner fillets than the much bigger chinook. Sockeyes are valued for their delicious fat (second to chinook), firm texture, and pronounced flavor.

Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), aka silvers, are a popular sport fish in the Pacific Northwest, valued for their reckless, spirited chase of a lure. They average 6 to 12 pounds. Of the five salmon species, coho has the third-highest amount of fat and should be considered a great value: it has good flavor and is much more affordable per pound than sockeye or chinook.

Chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*), aka keta or dogs, ranging from 6 to 17 pounds, are the last salmon species to spawn, and are considered the least valuable commercially. Chum often get a bad rap in the culinary world. I find this to be a crisis of imagination and a waste of a good protein source. Because of how lean they are, I prefer to steam or smoke them, or cook them in chowders to preserve their moisture. *Ikura* (see page 222) are the eggs from chum salmon.

**SEASON:** Chinook: May to September, with a southeast Alaska winter season from mid-October to mid-April. Pink: June to November. Sockeye: May to September. Coho: June to October. Chum: June to November.

**BUYING TIPS:** A salmon's pin bones run along the dorsal side of both fillets. Want a crystal ball into the salmon's recent past? Look carefully at the pin bones. Think of it this way: pin bones are just like any bone, and the older the flesh gets, the more it pulls away from the bone. If you see a divot (flesh pulled back from the bone) around the pin bones, it's a sign that the fillet is old. A fresh salmon will have pin bones that are right at the surface of the flesh or slightly beneath. Furthermore, if you see gaping or tearing of the flesh, it's usually a sign that the fish was mishandled.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** Most importantly, is this salmon wild or farmed? Stick with wild. Stick with wild. Stick with wild. I feel so strongly about this I said it three times. There are some farmed salmon operations that are closed containment; that is my only current exception to this rule. Another question would be, what river did it come from?



**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** When I get any fish fillet home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** There are three main ways to catch a wild salmon.

*Purse seining:* Think of a purse seine as a big net that is pulled from the back (stern) of the boat into the sea by a smaller skiff (boat). Once in the water, the skiff pulls the net in a circle around a school of salmon as they swim by. Then the net is pulled up, like a purse with a drawstring top, scooping the fish into the net.

*Trolling (hook and line):* As mentioned previously, trolling is the commercial equivalent of rod and reel fishing: several lines off the boat, individual fish caught and handled.

*Gill-netting:* Gill nets trap the salmon in the mesh of a net as they swim by. As the fish try to back out of the net, their gills get caught in its holes.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** Salmon has a lot of flavor and, depending on which species you get, varying levels of fat. You'll want to substitute a fatty fish such as black cod for a piece of chinook or sockeye salmon. Leaner salmon species, such as chum, pink, and coho, could be substituted with arctic char.

***What's that white stuff*** you sometimes see on salmon when it cooks? A lot of people think it is fat, but it is actually a protein called albumin (also found in egg whites). The goal in cooking salmon perfectly is to not see albumin form on the top of the fish. See the final salmon photograph on page 103: albumin has formed and is clearly visible between the flakes on the top of the fish. This is exactly what you want to avoid. A little around the bottom or sides is fine, but when the albumin comes out of the top in great quantity, the fish is overcooked.



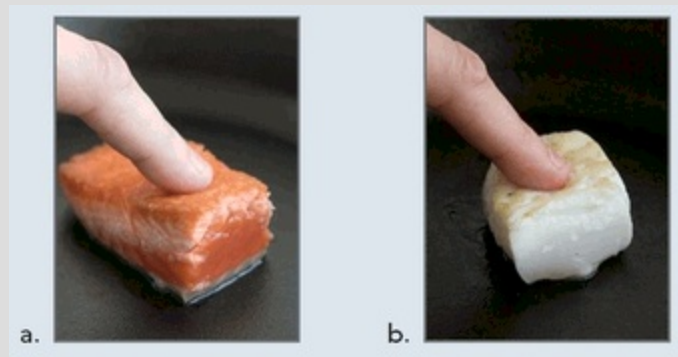
## THE ANATOMY OF A FLAKE

There's a lot in a word. It seems that most of fish cookery has boiled down to five letters: F-L-A-K-E. If you are comfortable with the concept of "flake," "flaking," or often, "just flaking," then proceed to the recipes. If, though, this concept is one of the world's great mysteries to you, as it was to many of my cooking students over the years, then you might need some helpful clarification. First, a story. I once knew someone who had a temp job copyediting recipes. She was most definitely

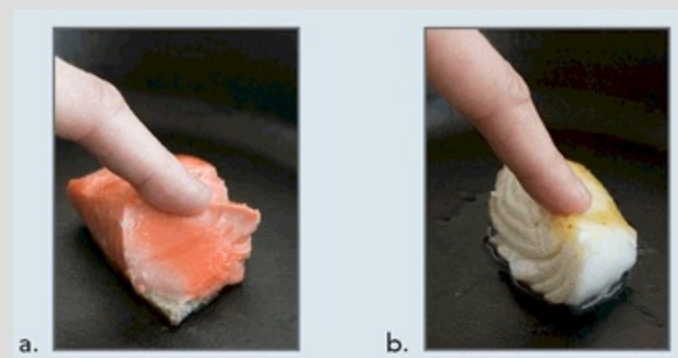


not a cook and could burn water, bless her heart. In her one day at this job, she took out the word “just” every single time it appeared before “flakes” in all the fish recipes, so that, for example, “Cook the salmon until it just flakes” became “Cook the salmon until it flakes.” She thought whoever was writing the recipes had terrible grammar. I gently teased her that there is a world of culinary difference between “just flaking” and “flaking,” which is why I began this lesson by saying there’s a lot in a word.

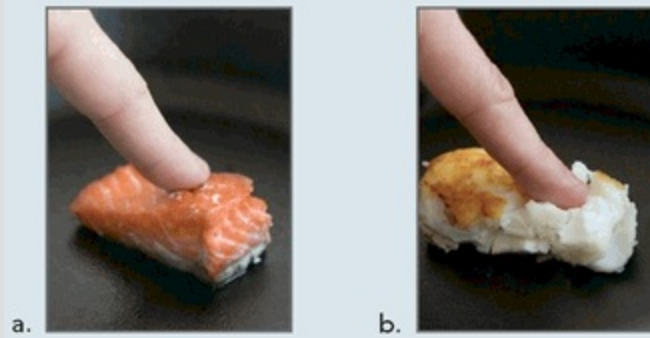
So, to brass tacks. I feel pictures are in order here.



Here I am pressing on a piece of salmon (a) and halibut (b) that is not flaking, not “just flaking,” not even thinking about flaking. It’s totally not there yet, unless it’s a piece of albacore or a scallop and then, well, I’d eat it anywhere from raw to just seared on the outside.



This is exactly the doneness you are looking for. A press of the finger reveals a sliding away, ever so gently, of the fish into the beginning of individual flakes. The center of the halibut is still glistening with juices and ever so slightly translucent; the salmon is a nice medium rare. I call this the “thinking about flaking” stage, a phrase I prefer to “just flaking,” which is confusing to some. I removed the fish from the pan about one minute before these photos were taken. Then I lightly covered the fish, which kept it warm and allowed it to finish cooking to the perfect stage of doneness.



Oh boy, we've gone too far here. This is where my copy editor friend was trying to send all those unwitting recipe readers. Behold: Fish. Flaking. This fish still has some moisture, but I guarantee, by the time it hits your plate, it will have that squeaky, almost mealy, dry, tooth-grabbing texture that is the calling card of the fish *flake*. When the moisture finally returns to your mouth, get a fresh piece of fish and practice, practice, practice.

### **wild salmon chowder with fire-roasted tomatoes**

1 tablespoon extra-virgin  
olive oil  
1 medium onion, cut into  
small dice  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 ribs celery, cut into  
small dice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
1 medium Yukon Gold or small  
russet potato, peeled, cut  
into small dice  
1 teaspoon minced fresh  
thyme  
1 fresh or dried bay leaf  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cayenne  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry white wine  
1 (14-ounce) can diced  
tomatoes  
1 cup water  
1 cup clam juice  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cream  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  pound wild pink, chum, or  
coho salmon fillet, skinned,<sup>[24](#)</sup>  
cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup minced fresh  
Italian parsley

*I adore this chowder. The trick here, just like with Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime (page 123), is to add the fish to the stockpot and then turn the heat off. This cooks the salmon gently, with the residual heat from the liquid in the pot finishing the job. This is especially important when using salmon species such as chum, pink, and coho that are lower in fat. This is the kind of recipe I teach my students when they say they don't have time to cook. I am tempted to point out that they are sitting through a two-and-a-half-hour cooking class and could have made this recipe five times over, but I don't. I'm hoping they buy this book so I can get the last word in, because being right and eating this soup—now that's delicious!*

SERVES 4

Grab yourself a large stockpot, add the olive oil, and heat over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion, garlic, celery, and salt for 5 minutes, then add the potato. Sauté for another 5 minutes. Add the thyme, bay leaf, cayenne, and white wine, stirring to loosen any bits clinging to the pot. Add the tomatoes, water, and clam juice, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft. Add the cream, salmon, and parsley; stir gently and turn off the heat. Let the soup sit for 5 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning before serving.

The chowder is better the next day and keeps well in the freezer for 2 months.

**PAIRING:** A Cru Beaujolais, such as Georges Duboeuf Morgon 2008, or a chardonnay from the Mâcon region of France.

### **hajime's steamed banana leaf salmon**

½ cup sake  
½ cup mirin  
¼ cup soy sauce  
½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger  
1 teaspoon lime juice  
Pinch of salt  
1 pound chum, coho, pink, or  
sockeye salmon (ask for a cut  
that includes the belly) fillet,  
cut into 4 equal portions  
Banana leaves, <sup>25</sup> cut into four  
8½-by-11-inch pieces  
1 ounce shiitake mushrooms,  
stems removed, tops sliced  
thin (heaping ¼ cup)  
¼ cup thinly sliced onion  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh  
shiso leaves, dill, or mint  
4 teaspoons unsalted butter

*As if Hajime Sato wasn't badass enough, riding his motorcycle around Seattle and ruling over his sushi bar with his webcams and sushi rules, he decided, after fifteen years of running his restaurant Mashiko, to stop contributing to the problems of the oceans. In 2009 he went 100 percent sustainable (as of this writing, his is one of only four sustainable sushi bars in the country): no more bluefin tuna, unagi, or farmed imported shrimp. It turns out Hajime does have a soft spot; he saves it for the fish and for those customers with an open mind.*

SERVES 4

In a medium bowl, combine the sake, mirin, soy sauce, ginger, lime juice, and salt. Add the salmon pieces and let them marinate for 20 to 30 minutes.

Lay the banana leaves out on a counter. On each leaf, place a quarter of the mushrooms, onions, and shiso leaves. Top with a piece of the salmon, reserving the marinade. Top each salmon piece with a teaspoon of butter. Fold the left and right sides of the leaves over the fish and then tuck under the top and bottom edges to form a square packet. Place the packets into a steamer basket. In a medium saucepan over high heat, add 2 cups water; when it boils, reduce the heat to a simmer, place the steamer basket into the pan, and cover. Cook for 8 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point).

Meanwhile, add the marinade to a small saucepan over high heat, and reduce until it has a syrupy consistency, about 15 minutes. Remove the salmon packets from the steamer basket and let them sit, undisturbed, for about 3 minutes. Check one packet and make sure the salmon is cooked to the doneness you like. Serve each person a banana packet and pass a bowl of the sauce.

**PAIRING:** A pinot gris, such as Chehalem 3 Vineyards 2008, Willamette Valley, Oregon, or a Beaujolais.





**grilled sockeye salmon with fennel two ways**

For the fennel salt:

1 tablespoon dried fennel

seeds

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black peppercorns

For the vegetables:

1 large fennel bulb, stems

removed, cut into thin

wedges, small frond pieces

reserved for garnish

1 red onion, cut into thick slices

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive

oil

For the salad:

¼ cup plain Greek-style yogurt

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Pinch of cayenne

½ teaspoon honey

Salt

4 cups salad greens (mixture of  
arugula, frisée, mizuna etc.)

For the salmon:

1 pound sockeye salmon fillet,

skin on, cut into 4 equal

portions

Vegetable oil, for oiling the grill

*When I was a child, I despised black jellybeans. I went so far as to think of them as assault weapons designed by adults to keep the candy bowl away from the children (see also: Good & Plentys and black licorice drops). But tastes change, children mature into adults, and suddenly I'm the one foisting licorice-tasting fennel onto children's plates. Fennel has become my favorite vegetable, next to kale; it marries perfectly with the strong character and richness of wild salmon. In this recipe, it is featured two ways: as a fennel salt rub and in wedges, smoky and sweet from the grill.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the fennel salt, grind the fennel seeds, salt, and peppercorns together in a spice grinder. Reserve.

To prepare the vegetables, in a medium bowl, toss the fennel and onion with the olive oil and 1 teaspoon of the fennel salt.



To prepare the salad, in a small bowl combine the yogurt, mustard, cayenne, and honey. Season to taste with salt. Right before serving, lightly coat the greens with 2 tablespoons of the dressing. Reserve the rest to use as a sauce for the salmon.

To prepare the salmon, remove the pin bones.<sup>26</sup> Coat the salmon pieces on all sides with the remaining fennel salt and set them aside on a plate in the refrigerator.

Preheat an outdoor gas grill or indoor grill pan to high heat. Oil the grill rack with vegetable oil.

Grill the fennel wedges and onion slices for 6 to 8 minutes, or until crisp-tender. Grill the salmon, skin side up, until the grill marks are clearly visible. Sockeye is usually fairly thin, so a ½-inch thick piece should cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side.

This is a great dish to serve family-style on a large platter. Place the salad in the middle of the platter and top with the salmon. Scatter the vegetables all around the platter. Garnish with small fennel fronds. Serve with the reserved sauce on the side.

**PAIRING:** A California pinot noir, such as Saintsbury Carneros 2007, or a New Zealand pinot noir.



### **jerk-spiced salmon with coconut pot liquor and sweet potato fries**

¼ teaspoon black peppercorns  
1 (1-inch) piece cinnamon stick  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon cumin seeds  
¼ teaspoon allspice berries  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
(or ½ teaspoon for a spicier rub)  
1 pound coho salmon fillets  
or steaks, skin on, cut into 4  
equal portions  
1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon  
extra-virgin olive oil, plus  
some for brushing the pan  
2 large orange sweet potatoes  
(sometimes labeled “yams”),

peeled and cut into 4-by-½-inch pieces (about 4 cups)  
¼ teaspoon plus ⅛ teaspoon salt

1 bunch kale leaves, stems removed, chopped into bite-size pieces (about 4 cups)

Heaping ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 (14-ounce) can salted black beans, drained and rinsed

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk

1 tablespoon high-heat vegetable oil

1 lime, cut into wedges, for garnish

*The food indulgences I love tend not to be very good for me: quality tequila, candy, deep-fried anything . . . especially doughnuts. Imagine my excitement when I developed a recipe that I could eat over and over again and which included some of the world's most healthful foods: wild salmon, dark leafy greens, beans, and sweet potatoes. Who needs doughnuts when you can eat kale that tastes this good? OK, well I do—but now, not as often.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Grind the peppercorns, cinnamon stick, kosher salt, cumin seeds, allspice berries, and red pepper flakes in a spice grinder until fine. Reserve 1 teaspoon of the spice rub to sprinkle on the sweet potatoes. Coat the salmon pieces on all sides with the remainder of the rub and set them aside on a plate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, lightly brush a sheet pan with olive oil. In a large bowl, toss the sweet potato pieces with 1 teaspoon of the olive oil, the reserved teaspoon of spice rub, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Spread them out on the pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until they are browned in spots. Remove from the oven and cover to keep warm. Leave the oven on.

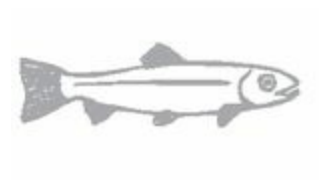
In a large pot over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the kale, ⅛ teaspoon salt, and pepper, and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the greens start to wilt. Add the black beans, apple cider vinegar, and coconut milk. Stir and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the greens are tender. Season to taste and keep warm until you are ready to serve.

In an ovenproof skillet over high heat, add the vegetable oil. When it is hot, carefully add the salmon fillets, skin side up. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the fillets are browned, then flip them carefully and place the skillet in the oven for 5 to 6 more minutes (assuming the fish is about an inch high measured at the thickest point). Ideally, the salmon should be served medium rare.



To serve, divide the greens and beans among 4 bowls and top each with a piece of salmon. Ladle some of the coconut “pot liquor” all around the outer edge of the bowl. Tuck some sweet potatoes alongside the salmon and garnish with a lime wedge.

**PAIRING:** A viognier, such as Kunin “Stolpman Vineyard” 2006, Central Coast, California, or an Alsatian pinot gris.





**roasted salmon with morels and pinot noir sauce**

For the pinot noir sauce:

¼ cup minced shallots  
1 teaspoon fennel seeds,  
lightly crushed with the side  
of a knife  
1 star anise pod  
2 teaspoons honey  
1 bottle pinot noir  
4 cups vegetable or chicken  
stock

For the vegetables:

1 large turnip or rutabaga, cut  
into medium dice  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin  
olive oil, plus additional for  
drizzling  
1 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper  
1 small leek, cut into medium  
dice  
3 ounces morel mushrooms,  
cleaned well and halved  
lengthwise (about 1 cup)

For the roasted salmon:

1 pound wild king salmon  
fillet, skinned, pin bones  
removed,<sup>[27](#)</sup> and cut into 4  
equal portions  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin  
olive oil  
Salt

For finishing:

1 cup (2 sticks) cold unsalted  
butter, cut into large dice

*I once thought butter sauces were a cop-out. Of course it tastes great, it's a butter sauce! On principle, I wouldn't make one. Then I got older and realized that the French didn't build their civilization upon the semifirm back of butter and barrels of wine on a whim. Sure, first there was that cook who drunkenly tipped his Burgundy into the butter pot, but then they codified that drunken miracle into the very fabric of their cuisine. We are all the beneficiaries of this legacy, and it was naïve bluster that kept me from embracing dishes such as this one, where copious*

*amounts of pinot noir meet butter, coating and enhancing the fatty goodness of a perfectly cooked piece of salmon. The earthy morel mushrooms and sweet leeks heighten this recipe and throw it completely over the top.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the sauce, in a wide saucepan over high heat, combine all of the sauce ingredients. Bring the liquid to a boil, then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Reduce the sauce until you have 1½ cups, about 40 minutes. While the sauce reduces, prepare the vegetables.

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

To prepare the vegetables, spread the turnips on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil, add the salt, and season to taste with pepper. Cover the turnips with foil and roast in the oven for 20 minutes. Uncover the turnips, add the leeks and morels, and stir well. Drizzle with a little more olive oil, season to taste with salt and pepper, and roast the vegetables, uncovered, for 20 more minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven, cover with foil, and set aside. Turn the oven temperature down to 250°F.

To prepare the salmon, lay the salmon pieces on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Rub them with the olive oil and season with salt. When the oven has cooled to 250°F, roast the salmon for 10 to 12 minutes, or until a gentle push on the top just reveals flaking (see page 102). It is best served on the rare side. Keep it warm, tented with foil, while you finish the sauce.

To finish the sauce, first strain it through a fine-mesh sieve. Return the sauce to the saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk the cold butter into the sauce a little at a time.

To serve, spoon a small amount of sauce onto each plate and top with the vegetables and salmon.

**PAIRING:** A Burgundy, such as Albert Bichot Vieilles Vignes Pinot Noir Bourgogne 2007, or a Chinon.







**pacific halibut**

***My first dealings with a whole halibut*** came soon after a career change, having bailed early on a track toward medical school. I chose sautéing over surgery, though I was pleased when I realized that white jackets, knife work, and a certain amount of blood were still in my future. I was a third-quarter culinary student when my chef-instructor heaved a large halibut up onto a stainless steel worktable. I learned that day that a “fletch” is a halibut fillet (there are four, unlike round fish, such as a salmon, which have two). I sharpened my knives and joined my fellow students in filleting the big beast, two fletches on the top, flip, two fletches on the bottom.

That halibut went through an early career change of sorts as well. A halibut starts its life as a round fish with an eye on either side of its head, as you might expect. However, by the time a halibut is six months old, it has settled down to the bottom of the ocean and made a transition to life as a flatfish. From then on both eyes—having shifted to the top side of its body—stare up at the world swimming by. This life change seems to suit the halibut, and I can say the same for myself. I chose the right career, shifting my gaze toward a life in food, and I, too, have never looked back.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch lists Pacific halibut as a “Best Choice.” U.S. North Pacific halibut is also a certified sustainable fishery of the Marine Stewardship Council. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) manages Pacific halibut along the West Coast. Every year the IPHC researches the health of the halibut population and helps set annual catch limits, known as Total Allowable Catch (TAC), which are then divided among individual vessels. This fishery is recognized as one of the best-managed in the world, according to many leading fisheries specialists, and has a very long history, dating back to the early twentieth century.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME** A small Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) is called a “chicken,” and a large one is called a “barn door.”

**SEASON:** The first sign of spring on the Pacific Coast is when fresh halibut starts appearing in the markets. The season is March through November, though frozen halibut is usually available year-round.

**BUYING TIPS:** Pay attention to the halibut’s color: it should be white or off-white. If it has a yellow tinge, it’s old. Dull white spots are a sign of freezer burn. If you happen to see halibut cheeks being sold, they are a nice treat—the finfish equivalent of crabmeat.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLEY** Where is the halibut from? Atlantic halibut is terribly overfished at this point, so make sure you are getting Pacific halibut, which is caught primarily in Alaska, but also in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** When I get any fish fillet home that I’m not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in

the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Halibut are flatfish that live deep in the ocean. They are caught by long-line gear that is set along the ocean floor. Bait is put on hooks every few yards. When the gear is pulled in, the halibut are brought onto the boat one by one, killed, and iced down.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Halibut is a firm, yet delicate fish, meaty and mild-tasting; some say it is a steak in fish form. A substitute for halibut would be Alaska Pacific cod.







**halibut tacos with tequila-lime marinade and red cabbage slaw**



For the red cabbage slaw:

$\frac{3}{4}$  pound red cabbage,  
shredded (about 4 cups)  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
1 Granny Smith apple, cored  
and grated  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon mustard seeds  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch cilantro leaves and  
stems, roughly chopped  
(about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)  
2 tablespoons apple cider  
vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil

For the tequila-lime marinade:

1 lime, first zested, then juiced  
(about 1 teaspoon zest and 2  
tablespoons juice)  
2 tablespoons tequila<sup>[28](#)</sup>  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
2 small jalapeños, halved, seeds  
and membranes removed,  
sliced crosswise into half rings  
1 small red onion, cut into thin  
half moons (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup)  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil

For the halibut:

1 pound halibut fillet, skinned<sup>[29](#)</sup>  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

For the taco bar:

Flour tortillas, warmed  
Sour cream  
Guacamole (optional)  
Extra limes  
Beers, of course  
Tequila

*I present to you the god father of fish tacos that I wait all winter for, pining longingly for the*

*spring season when the first wild Alaska halibut comes to market. If you have a bit more time, make some homemade guacamole. It is painfully simple: smash 2 ripe avocados with a fork, and add 1½ tablespoons lime juice, ¾ teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon hot sauce of your choice—mine is Tabasco.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the slaw, toss the cabbage with the salt. Place in a colander. Locate a bowl that will fit nicely into the colander, fill it with water, and set it on top of the cabbage. Set this in the sink. The weight of the bowl of water will help force water from the cabbage, concentrating its flavor.

In a large bowl, mix the grated apple with the mustard seeds, cilantro, apple cider vinegar, and olive oil. Give the cabbage a squeeze with those fancy kitchen tools of yours called “hands.” Rinse the salt off the cabbage and squeeze again, getting all the liquid out. Combine the cabbage with the rest of the slaw ingredients and season to taste with salt. Set aside.

To prepare the marinade, combine all of its ingredients in a small bowl.

To prepare the halibut, place it in a large pan. Pour the marinade over the fillet and set aside for 20 minutes.

In a grill pan or sauté pan over high heat, add the vegetable oil. Add the halibut, reserving the marinade, and cook until the fish is browned on one side, about 3 to 4 minutes. Flip the halibut carefully and continue cooking until the fish is thinking about flaking, but not quite yet flaking (see page 102), about 8 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). The fish will continue to cook a bit more after you take it from the heat. Transfer the fish to a platter. Add the marinade to the pan (or get out a fresh pan if you grilled the fish) and cook the marinade over high heat for 5 to 7 minutes, until the liquid evaporates and the jalapeños and onions are lightly charred. Then add the marinade back on top of the fish, which, by this point, should be flaking nicely.

Set up the best taco bar you’ve ever seen, with warmed tortillas; bowls of sour cream, guacamole, and red cabbage slaw; the platter of halibut with charred jalapeños and onions; limes; shot glasses filled with good tequila; and beer, lots of beer.

**PAIRING:** Red Stripe Jamaican lager or tequila.



**roasted halibut with radicchio-pancetta sauce, peas, and artichokes**

1 pound halibut fillet, skinned,<sup>30</sup>  
cut into 4 equal portions  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive  
oil  
2 ounces pancetta, lightly  
smoked bacon, or prosciutto,  
cut into medium dice  
½ cup sliced shallots  
¼ pound radicchio, chopped  
into bite-size pieces (about 3  
cups)  
1 teaspoon honey  
1 tablespoon white wine  
vinegar  
1 tablespoon white wine or dry  
vermouth  
1 cup fish stock, clam juice, or  
vegetable broth  
½ cup frozen, canned, or jarred  
artichoke hearts, quartered  
(thawed and patted dry, if  
using frozen)  
½ cup fresh or frozen peas  
(thawed if using frozen)  
½ lemon

*Since halibut comes into season in the spring, it makes sense to pair it with peas and artichokes, two vegetal harbingers of the kinder, gentler season. I love the fact that this is a one-dish dinner—from the stove top to the oven to serving right from the skillet—a weeknight meal that seems fancier than it is. As with all the halibut recipes, really lean on the side of undercooking the fish. You can always cook it for another minute longer if it is not to your liking, but, unless you know something I don't about the progression of Father Time, a piece of overcooked fish has nowhere to go but more overcooked.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Lightly season the halibut fillets with salt and pepper. In a large ovenproof skillet over high heat, add the vegetable oil and sear the fillets for 3 minutes, or until they are browned on one side. Transfer them to a plate, and turn the heat down to medium high. Add the olive oil, pancetta, and shallots, and cook until the pancetta starts to crisp, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the radicchio and honey, and cook for

another 3 to 4 minutes, or until the radicchio wilts and caramelizes. Add the white wine vinegar, white wine, and fish stock, stirring to loosen any bits clinging to the skillet. Add the artichokes and peas, stir, then nestle the halibut pieces back in the pan, browned side up. Place the pan in the oven and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the halibut is done. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice over the top. Serve each person a piece of fish and a portion of vegetables, ladling the broth over the top of the fish.

**PAIRING:** A muscadet, such as Luneau-Papin “L d’Or” Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur Lie, or a rosé.





**halibut coconut curry with charred chiles and lime**

2 jalapeños, seeds and membranes  
removed from 1 or  
both, if you want less heat  
2 stalks lemongrass, woody top  
half discarded, chopped  
½ cup roughly chopped  
shallots  
¼ cup cilantro stems  
1 clove garlic  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh  
galangal or ginger  
1 teaspoon coriander seeds,  
ground in a spice grinder  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds,  
ground in a spice grinder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon dried turmeric,  
or 1 teaspoon grated fresh  
turmeric  
5 Kaffir lime leaves,<sup>[31](#)</sup> or zest of  
2 limes (about 2 teaspoons)  
Chicken or vegetable stock or  
water  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
½ pound halibut fillet, skinned<sup>[32](#)</sup>  
and cut into 1-inch cubes  
Black sesame seeds, for garnish  
(optional)

For the topping:

1 teaspoon vegetable oil  
4 Fresno chiles, seeded and  
minced  
2 tablespoons minced red  
onion  
⅓ cup chopped cilantro leaves  
2 limes, peeled and flesh cut  
into small dice  
Salt

*I don't know what it is about this dish that brings me so much joy—perhaps it starts with the*

*color: bright green curry set off against the vivid red onion and charred chile garnish, with little bits of lime. Or perhaps it's the texture: silky coconut milk meeting tender, yielding halibut contrasted with tiny, crunchy sesame seeds and the slight pull of jalapeño. It could be the flavor: sweetness balanced with spice and the savor of garlic and shallot, the cilantro hitting the herbal high note, clean and fresh until the cumin brings you back down to earth. Perhaps it's all of it, washing over your senses the way food hits you on the streets of Bangkok—impossible to tease out the flavors from the high-pitched moped whine, the assault of fish sauce on your nasal passages, the sun beating down on your shoulders, a well-used bottle of red chile oil within arm's reach.*

SERVES 4

Add the jalapeños, lemongrass, shallots, cilantro, garlic, galangal, coriander, cumin, salt, turmeric, and 1 of the Kaffir lime leaves to the bowl of a food processor and blend, using up to ¼ cup chicken stock to help the mixture process into a smooth purée. You'll have to scrape down the curry once or twice. Blend well for at least 3 minutes.

In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, add the vegetable oil. Add the curry and fry it for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the coconut milk, fish sauce, and the remaining Kaffir lime leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the halibut and turn the heat off. Let the residual heat gently cook the fish. After 5 minutes, it will be ready to serve. Garnish with the sesame seeds.

To prepare the topping, heat the vegetable oil in a small sauté pan over medium-high heat. Fry the chiles and onion until they are caramelized, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the cilantro and lime. Season to taste with salt. Serve a spoonful on top of each person's curry.

**PAIRING:** A German riesling, such as Joh. Jos. Christoffel Erben, Ürziger Würzgarten, Spätles 2006, Mosel, or an Alsatian gewürztraminer.







**halibut escabèche with anchovy and almond salsa verde**



For the spice rub:

½ teaspoon black  
peppercorns  
¼ teaspoon cumin seeds  
½ teaspoon coriander seeds  
2 fresh or dried bay leaves  
¼ teaspoon brown sugar  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 pound halibut fillet,  
skinned,<sup>[33](#)</sup> cut into 4 equal  
portions

For the salsa verde:

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
⅓ cup roughly chopped fresh  
Italian parsley  
2 canned or jarred anchovies  
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
1 teaspoon capers  
½ tablespoon golden raisins  
or currants  
6 whole almonds  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
¼ teaspoon salt

For the halibut:

1 tablespoon high-heat vegetable oil

For the garnish:

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ cup diced red onions  
Pinch of salt  
1 tablespoon roughly chopped  
Marcona or regular almonds  
1 small carrot, sliced into short  
ribbons using a vegetable  
peeler  
1 tablespoon raisins or currants  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
¼ cup water  
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

*This is my version of escabèche, a dish of Spanish origin with variations in many cuisines, in which you sear or poach fish or meat and then marinate it in a vinegary sauce. A refreshing dish,*

*it is usually served cold or at room temperature in hot climates. Halibut is mild and somewhat delicate, and most people treat it so—serving it simply, just pan-fried, with light butter sauces or in broths. I think there is also a firmness and blank-slate quality to halibut that make me want to spice it up for a night, send it to Spain, see what trouble it gets into. Escabèche with anchovy salsa verde does just that.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the rub, finely grind the peppercorns, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, bay leaves, brown sugar, and salt in a spice grinder. Coat the halibut fillets with the rub and set aside in the refrigerator while you make the salsa verde.

To prepare the salsa verde, add all of its ingredients to a food processor and blend to a smooth purée. Set aside.

To prepare the halibut, in a large sauté pan over high heat, add the vegetable oil. When the oil is hot, add the fillets skin side up and cook until the fish is browned on one side, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip the halibut carefully and continue cooking until a nice brown crust develops and the fish is just flaking, about 8 minutes total per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). Remove the fillets just before you think they are done. Lightly cover them and set aside.

To prepare the garnish, add the olive oil to the pan you cooked the fish in and turn the heat to medium high. Add the red onion and salt, and sauté for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the onions have softened. Add the almonds, carrot, raisins, and paprika. Sauté for 2 minutes, or until the nuts are toasted, and then deglaze the pan with the water. Reduce until there is no liquid left and then add the sherry vinegar. Stir well and pour the mixture over the halibut. Cover the fish to keep it warm and allow it to marinate with the garnish for 10 minutes. Uncover and serve with the salsa verde on the side.

**PAIRING:** A vinho verde, such as Quinta da Aveleda 2008, Casal Garcia, Portugal, or a verdelho.



### **smoked halibut with stinging nettle sauce and nettle gnocchi**

3 ounces fresh morels (about  
1 cup), or 1 ounce dried  
morels

Nettle Gnocchi (recipe follows)

1 cup blanched, drained, and

chopped nettles,<sup>34</sup> reserved  
from the Nettle Gnocchi  
1 bunch fresh Italian parsley  
leaves  
1 cup plain Greek-style yogurt  
1½ teaspoons salt  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
½ cup mushroom stock (from  
rehydrating the dried morels  
or purchased stock)  
Freshly ground pepper  
1 pound halibut fillet, cut into  
4 equal portions  
½ cup apple wood or alder  
wood chips (optional)  
2 tablespoons high-heat  
vegetable oil  
¼ cup salmonberry blossoms<sup>35</sup>  
(optional)

*We must have a deliriously starving person who got lost in the woods to thank for discovering that nettles are delicious and healthful. This person must have fallen into a stinging nettle patch mouth agape, and while screaming in pain, decided to eat the plant to exact revenge upon the aggressor. This dish is a celebration of spring vitality and the foraging spirit. So many delicious edibles come together here: halibut from the ocean, wood from the trees to use for smoking, nettles so easily dismissed as weeds, salmonberry blossoms for color, and morels found in secret spots deep in the woods, hidden in the dirt and brush. To the victor go the spoils.*

SERVES 4

If you have fresh morels, fry a test one to see if it is sandy. If so, you'll want to quickly rinse the morels in several changes of cold water and test another one for grit. When they are clean, dry them on paper towels and halve them lengthwise. If you are using dried morels, rehydrate them in a small bowl of very hot tap water to cover. (Place a small bowl on top of the mushrooms to keep them submerged.) After 20 minutes, transfer the morels to another bowl with a slotted spoon and set aside. Strain the mushroom stock into another container, being careful to leave the sediment at the bottom of the bowl. Reserve the stock.

Make the Nettle Gnocchi.

Add the reserved blanched nettles, parsley, yogurt, salt, olive oil, and mushroom stock to the bowl of a food processor and blend well (for up to 3 minutes), until smooth. Push the sauce through a fine-mesh strainer if you desire a smoother texture. Season to taste with pepper. Set aside.

Boil the Nettle Gnocchi (see page 130) and set aside.

Smoke the halibut according to the instructions on page 131.<sup>36</sup> Alternatively, you can pan-sear it: In a large sauté pan over high heat, add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil. Season the halibut with salt and

pepper. When the oil is hot, add the halibut to the pan and cook it until browned on one side, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip the fillets carefully and continue cooking until the fish is just flaking, for a total of 8 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). Transfer the fish to a platter. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon vegetable oil to the pan and then the morels and gnocchi. Sauté until the edges of the mushrooms crisp up a little, 4 to 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside and keep warm.

To serve, ladle a small amount of nettle sauce in the center of each of 4 plates. Carefully spoon a portion of the morels and gnocchi to one side of the sauce. Top with a piece of halibut and garnish with salmonberry blossoms.

**PAIRING:** A white Sancerre from the Loire Valley, such as Lucien Crochet 2007, or a California sauvignon blanc.

## ***NETTLE GNOCCHI***

1¼ cups packed nettle leaves<sup>[37](#)</sup>

2 pounds (about 2 large)

russet potatoes

1 egg, beaten

¾ cup all-purpose flour, plus  
additional for kneading

¼ teaspoon salt

SERVES 4 TO 6

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To prepare the nettles for both the gnocchi and the sauce, bring a large pot of water to a boil. While the water heats, fill a medium bowl with ice water. When the water is boiling, using gloves or tongs, carefully add the nettles, making sure they are submerged. Cook for exactly 5 minutes. Remove them immediately with a slotted spoon or tongs and plunge them into the ice bath. When the nettles have cooled, remove them from the ice bath and with your hands squeeze out all the water. Finely chop the nettles. Divide into two portions: set aside ¼ cup for making the gnocchi and reserve 1 cup for making the sauce.

Pierce the potatoes all over with the tines of a fork. Bake them in the oven directly on a rack for about 1 hour, flipping them after 30 minutes, until they are tender. While they are still hot (and using towels to protect yourself), slip the potato skins from the potato and discard. Run the potato and nettles through a ricer or food mill, or mash the potatoes really well by hand and then mash the nettles into the potatoes. Cool on a baking sheet.

When the potatoes are cool, transfer them to a bowl and stir in the egg, flour, and salt. Mix well with a wooden spoon and then knead the dough in the bowl until it forms a ball, adding more flour if necessary. Transfer the dough to a wooden board and divide it into 8 pieces. Roll each piece into a long rope about ¾ inch in diameter. When all the pieces are rolled out, cut each rope into gnocchi



approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long. If desired, use a fork to press down the gnocchi, lightly dragging it back to shape them. For a different look, you can pick up the gnocchi and roll them off the tines of the fork. To freeze the gnocchi for later use, place them on a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet (make sure they are not touching each other), and put them in the freezer for about 1 hour. When the gnocchi are frozen, transfer them to a resealable plastic bag and use within 3 months.

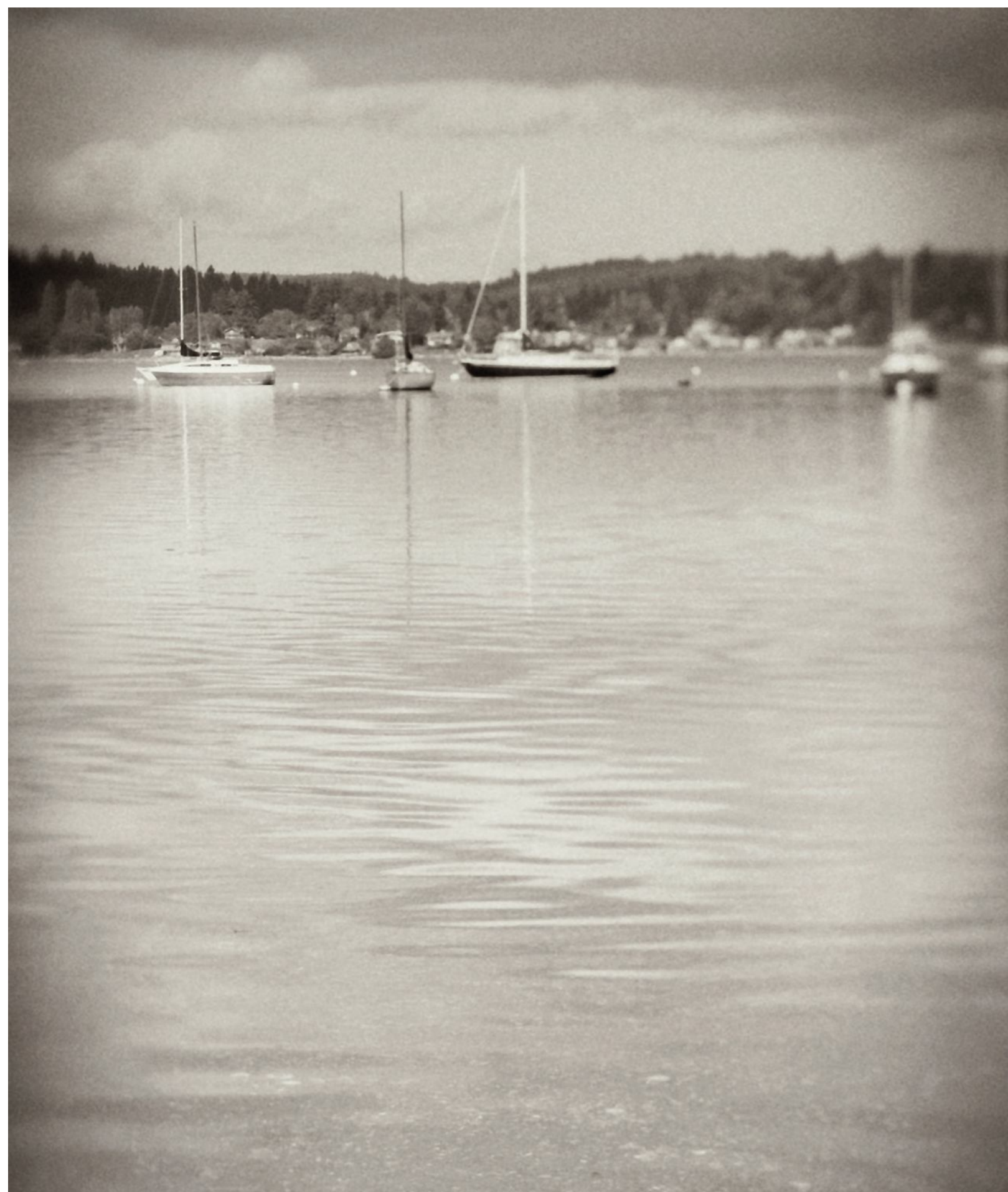
If cooking the gnocchi immediately, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Season the water generously with salt and add the gnocchi in batches. Cook until they float to the surface and then, after about 1 minute, taste one: it should be light and fluffy, not dense. Cook a little longer if necessary; then, using a slotted spoon, transfer the gnocchi to a bowl.

If you are not serving them right away, drizzle the gnocchi with some olive oil or butter to keep them from sticking together. Or transfer the cooked gnocchi immediately into a sauté pan to brown them.

## HOW TO SMOKE FISH AT HOME

If you have an actual, legitimate smoker, I'm jealous! For the rest of us: you can turn a wok into a makeshift smoker. I recommend doing this in an outdoor grill if you don't have a good kitchen fan. (But if you do, turn on the fan, disable your smoke alarm, open a few windows, and get started.)

Set the wok over high heat. Place about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup soaked wood chips (I prefer apple wood or alder) in the bottom of the wok. I use a propane torch to quickly ignite the chips, then I leave them to burn for about 1 minute, blow out the flames, cover the wok, and allow it to fill with smoke (about 2 minutes). Lacking a torch, you can instead simply cover the wok and wait for the high heat to get the wood smoking (this will take a little longer, 3 to 4 minutes). Once the wok is filled with smoke, carefully lay a circular rack (sprayed or brushed with oil) inside the wok. Season your fish with salt and pepper. Lay the fish carefully on the rack. Cover and smoke the fish over high heat for 8 to 9 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). You'll see the flesh turn a nice golden color when the smoke has penetrated. This method is called "hot-smoking," which cooks the fish all the way through.



**black cod**

***Names are secondary to experiences*** when you're a child. Somewhere deep down in my childhood mind I might have known the fish I kept returning to was called sablefish, but that seemed beside the point. The point was reaching across the table with fork extended before my stupid brothers could take it all.

Sablefish was brought to our family table in what we called "the spread." The spread happened when Uncle Vic and Aunt Selly would come in from "the city" (New York) and bring with them "the fixin's" from Russ and Daughters. There would be bialys and bagels, sablefish and whitefish, herring, lox, and pickles. My grandmother would contribute onions, cream cheese, wedges of lemon, black olives, and big slices of her garden tomatoes. Bagel sandwiches would get piled so high we couldn't stuff them in our mouths and instead had to deconstruct them with knife and fork. The spread, the accompaniments, the extended family around my grandparent's big dining room table—this is what I think of when I taste black cod.

It wasn't until years later that I realized sablefish and black cod are the same thing. In fact, I do believe I've said at a cocktail party or two that my two favorite fish were sablefish and black cod. At least I'm consistent.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**Black cod from Alaska are abundant and healthful; Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch lists them as a "Best Choice," and black cod from California, Oregon, and Washington as a "Good Choice." U.S. Pacific black cod is also a certified sustainable fishery of the Marine Stewardship Council. Most of the world's black cod comes from Alaska.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Black cod (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) is also known as sablefish.

**SEASON:** Alaska: March through November. British Columbia: Year-round (but peak is January through April). California, Oregon, Washington: August through October.

**BUYING TIPS:**I like to buy fish fillets that are center-cut versus buying tail pieces, so that I get a thicker piece that is more resistant to overcooking. With black cod, on the other hand, I sometimes prefer tail pieces because they are boneless (black cod bones are not difficult to remove once the fish is cooked, but sometimes it's nice to eat with abandon). Besides, overcooking is very difficult with black cod. This fish is full of fat and flavor, high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. You'd literally have to walk completely away from the kitchen for 30 minutes to dry this fish out (not that I'm encouraging you to do that). If you can find black cod collars (the fatty meat inside the gill frame), you are in for an extra-special decadent treat if you marinate and broil them.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLEY****E:**the black cod from Alaska? Is it wild? Most black cod is wild, but I'm starting to see farmed Canadian product coming to market. Like farmed salmon, most of the farmed black cod in offshore operations carry many environmental risks.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH**When I get any fish fillet home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED**Black cod is caught in the wild using three different methods: long-lining (see Wild Fish on page xxix for an explanation), in pots, or by trawling (see page xxix for an explanation). In Alaska and British Columbia, the first two methods are used (making black cod from those areas a Best Choice), whereas in California, Oregon and Washington, black cod used to be caught by trawling, though fishermen tell me that Pacific Coast black cod fisheries are mostly pot or long-line now.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES**Hmmm, a stick of butter comes to mind. Or perhaps a piece of halibut coated with butter, wrapped in bacon, and coated with more butter. A really fatty piece of chinook would be the closest substitute for the richness of black cod.





**roasted black cod with bok choy and soy caramel sauce**

5 ounces red cabbage, thinly  
sliced (about 2 cups)  
2 large bulbs bok choy, halved  
2 small tomatoes, halved  
Salt  
4 green onions, white and  
green parts cut into 3-inch  
lengths  
4 teaspoons toasted sesame oil  
4 teaspoons seasoned rice wine  
vinegar  
4 slices lime  
1 serrano chile, sliced (optional)  
1 pound black cod fillet or  
steaks, cut into 4 equal  
portions  
½ cup Soy Caramel Sauce  
(page 53)  
4 cups cooked rice

*Typically when I develop a recipe, I do my utmost to roll out a red carpet for the star ingredient. I may add other ingredients to boost the star, but it's clear they play second fiddle. A great piece of fish deserves top billing. Herbs, spices, and sauces are relegated to the role of supporting cast—until now. Let me be frank: this dish is all about the soy caramel. It was always all about the soy caramel. The black cod is merely a delicious platform on which the sauce sits. The bok choy and cabbage are vegetal intermissions. When the house lights dim, the soy caramel upstages them all.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil.

You're going to make 4 separate piles on the foil. Each pile will get ½ cup cabbage, a bok choy half, a tomato half sprinkled with a little salt, and a quarter of the green onions. Drizzle each pile with 1 teaspoon sesame oil and 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar. Top with a lime slice and sprinkle with some chile pieces. Roast the vegetables in the oven for 20 minutes, or until they are soft and lightly browned around the edges. Keep the oven on.

Remove the pan from the oven, place one piece of black cod, skin side down, on each pile, and drizzle 1 tablespoon soy caramel sauce on each piece of fish. Roast for another 8 to 10 minutes or until a press of the finger reveals a sliding away, ever so gently, of the fish into the beginning of individual flakes. Serve with the rice and remaining soy caramel sauce.

**PAIRING:** An Oregon pinot gris, such as Eyrie Vineyards 2007, Willamette Valley, or a Savennières from the Loire Valley in France.

**sake-steamed black cod with ginger and sesame**

1 pound black cod fillet, cut  
into 4 equal portions  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 cup sake  
1 cup water  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon grated fresh  
ginger  
2 teaspoons plus ¼ teaspoon  
toasted sesame oil  
8 ounces (about 4 cups) fresh  
spinach  
¼ cup thinly sliced radishes  
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons  
seasoned rice wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
½ teaspoon sugar

*Black cod is an extremely rich fish, full of good omega-3 fatty acids, and therefore kind to novice cooks, as it is hard to overcook. I developed this recipe to downplay the black cod's natural fattiness for a night when you want a lighter meal. The fish and spinach are steamed and served with the sake-infused steaming liquid and a quick radish-and-sesame pickle.*

SERVES 4

Season the black cod generously with salt and pepper.

Add the sake, water, soy sauce, ginger, and 2 teaspoons of the sesame oil to a pot with a steamer insert (you could use your pasta pot and insert). Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add the spinach to the steamer insert (making sure the liquid is below the bottom of the insert), cover the pot, and steam the spinach for 5 to 7 minutes, or until wilted. Remove the spinach and set aside to cool. Turn off the heat, leaving the sake broth in the bottom of the pot.

In a small bowl, mix the radishes with 1 tablespoon of the rice wine vinegar. Let the radishes marinate until you are ready to serve.

Squeeze all of the liquid out of the spinach with your hands, and chop it into bite-size pieces. In a small sauté pan, toast the sesame seeds over medium-high heat until lightly browned and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Reserve 1 teaspoon for garnish. Grind the rest of the sesame seeds with the sugar in a spice grinder or mortar and pestle. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in 1 tablespoon of the sake broth, the remaining 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar, a pinch of salt, and the remaining ¼ teaspoon sesame oil. Toss the spinach with this dressing. Place the spinach in a deep, wide serving bowl and cover to keep warm. Set aside.

Bring the sake broth back to a boil. Place the black cod pieces on the steamer insert and place over the boiling liquid. Cover the pot and steam the fish for 9 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). The fish is done when a press of the finger reveals a sliding away, ever so gently, of the fish into the beginning of individual flakes.

To serve, top the spinach with the steamed black cod. Pour some of the sake broth over the fish and around the spinach. Squeeze the rice wine vinegar from the radishes and mix them with the reserved teaspoon of sesame seeds. Garnish the fish with the radish-sesame pickle.

**PAIRING:** Junmai-shu sake or gewürztraminer.



### **jerry's black cod with shiso-cucumber salad and carrot vinaigrette**

For the carrot vinaigrette:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup carrot juice  
2 tablespoons chopped  
shallot  
1 teaspoon grated fresh  
ginger  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup peanut or high-quality  
vegetable oil

For the black cod:

1 pound black cod fillet, cut  
into 4 equal portions  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons sugar

For the shiso-cucumber salad:

3 tablespoons seasoned rice  
wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 teaspoons grated fresh  
ginger  
1 teaspoon minced serrano  
chile



2 tablespoons minced red  
onion  
1½ tablespoons chopped  
fresh shiso, or 2 tablespoons  
chopped mint or cilantro  
1 English cucumber, cut in half  
lengthwise, deseeded, cut  
into thin half moons

For garnish:

2 fresh shiso leaves, sliced into very thin strips

*A great recipe is based on three things: first, using the highest-quality seasonal ingredients; second, achieving a perfect balance of sweet, spicy, salty, bitter, and sour; and finally, it comes from a great chef whom you begged to contribute to your book. This one comes from the former chef of The Herbfarm Restaurant and the owner of Poppy in Seattle, Jerry Traunfeld. This is a winner of a dish that I adapted only slightly, and it fires on all fronts. Thanks, Jerry!*

SERVES 4

To prepare the vinaigrette, in a small saucepan over medium-high heat combine the carrot juice, shallot, ginger, lemon juice, and salt, and cook until the liquid boils down to about one third of the amount you started with, about 10 minutes. Cool. Pour the carrot reduction into a blender and, with the motor running, slowly pour in the vegetable oil. Set aside.

To prepare the black cod, toss the fillets with the soy sauce and sugar in a mixing bowl or resealable plastic bag. Marinate the fish in the refrigerator for about 2 hours.

To prepare the salad, in a medium bowl combine the rice wine vinegar, lemon juice, ginger, chile, red onion, and shiso. Let the dressing sit for 30 minutes to mellow the onion and meld the flavors. Toss the cucumber with the dressing.

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Transfer the fish to a baking sheet, discarding the marinade. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until a small amount of liquid collects at the bottom of the fillets and the fish flakes easily when nudged with your finger.

Put small mounds of the shiso-cucumber salad on each of 4 plates. Prop a fish fillet on each. Drizzle about 1 tablespoon of the carrot vinaigrette alongside the fish. Garnish with the shiso.

**PAIRING:** A Kabinett riesling, such as Willi Schaefer, Graacher Domprobst 2007, Mosel, Germany, or an Alsatian pinot gris.

### **black cod with toasted almond milk, delicata squash, and frizzled leeks**

1 pound center-cut black cod  
fillet, skin on  
½ cup whole almonds

1 small delicata squash<sup>38</sup>

1 medium leek

1 cup water

1 cup clam juice

1 cup whole milk

1 tablespoon soy sauce

2 teaspoons seasoned rice wine

vinegar

1 cup plus 1 tablespoon high-

heat vegetable oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

*This is an atypical dish: the toasted almond milk is neither a soup nor a sauce, but a light broth infused with nuts, leeks, sweet winter squash, and the flavorful black cod bones, which imbue the dish with a notable depth. The lightness of the broth cuts the richness of the fish, while a nest of crispy fried leeks adds crunch and texture. The final, not to be missed, coup de grâce is a garnish of butter-fried almonds.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

While the oven is heating, trim the bones from the black cod fillet, reserving them along with any fish scraps. Cut the fillet into 4 equal portions and set aside.

Spread the almonds on a sheet pan and roast for 10 minutes, or until lightly browned. Allow the almonds to cool, then roughly chop. Set aside.

Trim the ends from the squash, halve it lengthwise, and remove and discard the seeds. Cut each half crosswise to make 4 equal portions and set aside.

Cut the white part of the leek into four 1-inch rounds and a 2-inch section of the light green part into fine julienne. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan, combine the black cod scraps and bones, half of the chopped almonds (reserve the other half for garnish), squash, white leek pieces, water, clam juice, milk, and soy sauce. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a very bare simmer and cook gently until the squash is tender, about 20 minutes. (The stock may appear to separate a bit; don't worry about that.) Remove the squash and leeks from the liquid, carefully wipe them, and transfer them to a small pan. Cover and keep warm in the oven.

Strain the liquid through a fine mesh strainer, return it to the saucepan, and cook over medium-high heat until it reduces by a quarter, about 10 minutes. Add the rice wine vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper. Keep warm.

Heat a small-circumference pot over high heat. Add 1 cup of the vegetable oil, making sure the oil fills a third or less of the pot (to prevent it from bubbling over). When the oil measures 350°F on a

deep-fat thermometer (or a tester piece of leek immediately bubbles and floats to the surface), add the julienned leek pieces and fry until they are barely light brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Remove the leeks with a slotted spoon and drain on a paper towel. Season to taste with salt and set aside.

Heat a large sauté pan over high heat. Season the black cod pieces with salt and pepper. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, and when the pan is very hot, carefully add the fillets skin side down. Lower the heat just slightly. Cook, undisturbed, until the skin crisps, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip the pieces and cook for just a few minutes longer, for a total cooking time of

9 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). Set the fish aside and keep it warm.

Add the butter to the pan and scrape up any remaining bits.

When the bubbles of the butter diminish, add the reserved almonds and cook until they brown, along with the butter, 3 to 4 minutes.

To serve, place a piece of fish, skin side up, in each of 4 wide bowls. Ladle some broth around the fish. Place a piece of squash and a piece of leek in each bowl. Drizzle some almond brown butter around the fish. Top with fried leeks and serve.

**PAIRING:** A chardonnay, such as Manuel Olivier Haut Cotes de Nuits Blanc 2006, Burgundy France, or an Orvieto.





tataki's "faux-nagi"



For the black cod:

1 pound black cod fillet, skin  
on  
Salt

For the sauce:

¼ cup low-sodium or regular  
soy sauce  
¼ cup sugar  
1½ tablespoons sake  
1½ tablespoons mirin  
½ cup dried bonito flakes<sup>40</sup>  
(also known as *katsuobushi*)  
2 tablespoons water

For the marinade:

2 tablespoons sake  
2 pieces kombu<sup>40</sup>

For serving:

1 teaspoon potato starch<sup>41</sup>  
1 tablespoon water  
2 tablespoons sesame seeds  
1½ cups cooked sushi rice  
1 sheet nori, cut into ½-by-3-  
inch strips (optional)

*I'll be honest with you. When I heard that unagi was an unsustainable choice<sup>39</sup> I went to the closest sushi bar and buried this new knowledge in thirty pieces of unagi nigiri. When I came down from my soy-soaked eel high, I felt like I was ready to go without. But I wasn't too happy about it. Until along came chefs Raymond Ho and Kin Lui at San Francisco's Tataki Sushi and Sake Bar—one of only four sustainable sushi bars in the United States—who developed this dish, which I adapted ever so slightly for this book. This brilliant dish takes its cue from the buttery richness of eel and, in my opinion, does it one better, with a more consistent texture and better flavor.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the black cod, season both sides of the fillet generously with salt. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 15 to 20 minutes. In the meantime, prepare the sauce.

To prepare the sauce, mix all of its ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer gently for about 10 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh strainer and discard the bonito flakes. Set aside.

To marinate the black cod, remove the fillet from the refrigerator and unwrap. Rinse the salt off with very cold water. Blot the fish dry with a paper towel. Wet a new paper towel with the sake and use this towel to moisten the kombu. Sandwich the fillet between the two pieces of sake-moistened kombu. Rewrap the fillet in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 to 40 minutes. Unwrap, remove the kombu (to prevent too strong a flavor), and return the fillet to the refrigerator in a bowl, covered with plastic wrap.

When you are ready to serve, reheat the sauce. Mix the potato starch with the water. Add half of this mixture to the sauce and wait until it thickens, stirring constantly, 2 to 3 minutes. Add more if necessary to thicken the sauce to the consistency of jam. Toast the sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium-high heat until lightly brown and fragrant.

Slice the fillet into 1/4-inch rectangular slices (as appropriate for nigiri). Lightly char one side of the fish with a small butane torch (or sear very briefly in a hot saucepan). Paint sauce on the fish with a small pastry brush. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

You can serve this dish one of two ways: Form nigiri by molding the rice into logs, laying the fish slices over the rice, and wrapping the narrow middles with nori “belts.” Brush the tops of the nigiri with more sauce. Alternatively, spoon the rice onto 4 plates, lay the fish slices on top of the rice, and drizzle sauce over the fish.

**PAIRING:** Junmai-shu sake or a domestic pinot gris.



rainbow trout



***I went trout fishing for the first time*** last summer, though the use of the word “trout” might be a tad bit generous. Technically I caught more trees, shrubs, and other anglers’ lines than I did trout. My wife, April, is the angler in our household. She grew up in Eastern Oregon, in a small town called La Grande. Her first trout-fishing trip was at 5 years old. As the only girl with two older brothers, she was being given a reprieve from icky “girl” activities, like playing house and dressing up dolls. Her older brother played patient and bemused teacher as she cast her first line onto her shirt. He laughed and detached the hook, pointed her shoulders in the right direction, and ducked as she sent her first successful cast into the lake. She stood back and acted as watchful sentry over that bobber, looking for any whisper of movement. Before too long that bobber disappeared under the water and then popped back up with a little dance. She tried to pull the fish in, but it appeared to have the upper hand. Her brother got the better of it and declared that trout to be, by far, the biggest catch of the whole trip.

For years afterward, April would beg her father to take her fishing. Father and daughter would set up their stools, place a forked stick in the ground, and lean their poles in the crook. They’d commune in silence (“shhh—the fish will hear us!” he’d warn her), staring out at the lake, a world of action beneath the illusion of stillness. April let me fish with her father’s pole this summer; we spent an entire day sharing the silence while I carefully baited the hook, cast the line just so, and then reeled in branch after branch after branch. April kindly didn’t say a word.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**Rainbow trout are native to the Pacific Northwest. Back in the day, native wild trout and oceangoing wild steelhead teemed in our rivers. These days, hatchery-stocked trout outcompete wild stock and have contributed to wild steelhead being listed as an endangered species. It’s good, therefore, to be aware of sustainable substitutes for native wild species, such as farmed rainbow trout.

Idaho produces about three-quarters of the farmed trout sold in the United States. Farmed trout is a sustainable choice for several reasons: 1) It is farmed in closed-containment systems, where escape is negligible. 2) Pesticide and antibiotic use is strictly regulated (though farmers do vaccinate their trout to prevent disease). 3) The feed conversion ratio for trout is relatively low, somewhere around 1 to 1.5 percent, meaning it takes anywhere from 1 to 1.5 pounds of feed to produce a pound of usable protein. 4) Water is partially treated before leaving the raceways, which limits pollution to neighboring areas.

One more thing to keep in mind with farmed fish in general: you are what you eat, and by extension, you are what your fish ate. We all need to put pressure on closed-containment fish farmers to feed their fish healthy food.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME**Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) are also known as silver trout and sometimes golden trout (although golden trout are technically a subspecies). To confuse matters further, outside the United States, trout can be farmed in the ocean in saltwater pens or cages and marketed as “steelhead” or “salmon-trout.” The flesh of these trout is reddish, as opposed to that of rainbows, which is white. This type of farming incurs the same sorts of significant environmental problems as offshore salmon farming (see page xxx).



**SEASON:** Year-round.

**BUYING TIPS:** Look for trout that have glistening skin with eyes that are bright and are not sunken. When pressed gently, the flesh should bounce back. It should smell good or neutral. Trout don't need to be scaled. Fishmongers are happy to remove the head, butterfly the trout, or fillet it for you.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** Where does it come from? Trout is raised on every continent but Antarctica. Buy domestic trout—if possible, from as close to your home as you can. If you see wild steelhead being sold, please consider giving it a break and not buying it.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** When I get any fish fillet home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Rainbow trout seed is purchased from hatcheries or grown directly on the farm, and fry are placed in concrete or earthen troughs called raceways in which fresh water continuously flows.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Farmed arctic char is a great replacement for farmed rainbow trout. A second choice would be wild pink or wild chum salmon.





**cast-iron rainbow trout**



½ ounce (½ cup) dried wild mushrooms, or 3 ounces (1 cup) fresh wild mushrooms  
Two (1-pound) whole rainbow trout, filleted<sup>42</sup>; heads, tails, and ribs removed  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
All-purpose flour, for dusting the fillets  
3 strips bacon, cut into small dice (about ½ cup)  
High-heat vegetable oil, for frying  
¼ cup small, whole fresh sage leaves  
½ cup dry white wine

*I learned how to make this dish when I cooked at La Spiga in Seattle. I loved its simplicity and earthy flavors: nutty trout, woodsy mushrooms (chanterelles are amazing in this recipe), smoky bacon, piney sage, and bright wine. You can serve the trout on a platter, but sometimes I'll transfer the fillets and sauce back to the skillet and serve it that way—the residual heat retained in the iron keeps the dish warm.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 200°F.

If using dried wild mushrooms, rehydrate them in 1 cup of very hot tap water. Place a small bowl on top of the mushrooms to keep them submerged. Let them sit for 30 minutes while you prepare the rest of the ingredients. If using fresh mushrooms, remove any grit by gently brushing or washing them, then cut into bite-size pieces.

Season the trout fillets with salt and pepper. Dust them with the flour on both sides, shaking off any excess.

Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook until its fat is rendered and it is crisp, 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer the bacon with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate and set aside, reserving the fat. Turn the heat up to high. When the pan is very hot, fry the trout fillets, skin side up, for about 2 minutes, then flip and cook for another 2 minutes, or just until the fillets brown. Transfer each fillet to an ovenproof platter and keep warm in the oven while you fry the remaining fish (add the vegetable oil, 1 tablespoon at a time, if the pan is dry).

When you've removed the last piece of fish, add 1 tablespoon oil to the pan. When the oil is hot, add the mushrooms and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until lightly browned. Add the sage leaves and cook for another minute. Add the bacon back to the pan, then add the wine, scraping the bottom of the pan

to release any stuck-on bits, and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes. Taste for seasoning, then pour the mushroom mixture over the fillets. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** An Oregon pinot noir, such as Broadley Vineyards 2007, Willamette Valley, or an Oregon chardonnay.



### **smoked trout mousse with radish and cucumber quick pickle**

For the mousse:

8 to 10 ounces smoked trout,<sup>[43](#)</sup>

skinned, cut into pieces

1½ tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon cayenne

4 ounces cream cheese

½ teaspoon minced fresh

lemon thyme, or ½ teaspoon

minced fresh thyme and 1

teaspoon lemon zest

¼ cup cream

Freshly ground pepper

For the radish and cucumber quick pickle:

¼ cup julienned radish

¼ cup small-diced cucumber

1 tablespoon snipped fresh

chives

1 tablespoon seasoned rice

wine vinegar

*I have a selection of recipes on hand that I informally call “What the hell do I bring to the potluck?” recipes. They are designed to step in when time betrays you and you’d like to show up to your friend’s home looking good with the least amount of effort expended. This recipe takes fifteen minutes tops, and you can garnish it with flair and drama at your friend’s home by loudly*



*kvetching about slaving over a hot stove for hours, even if you haven't.*

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

To prepare the mousse, add the smoked trout, lemon juice, salt, cayenne, cream cheese, and lemon thyme to a food processor and blend well, for at least 2 to 3 minutes. In a medium bowl, whip the cream into soft peaks using either an electric mixer or a whisk, and fold into the mousse to lighten it. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To prepare the quick pickle, in a small bowl, mix all of its ingredients and let sit for 30 minutes.

Serve the mousse on crackers or toast. Or if you suddenly find yourself with extra time, you could make smoked-trout deviled eggs (hard-boil some eggs and mix the mousse with the cooked egg yolk).

Garnish the mousse with a small amount of radish and cucumber quick pickle.

**PAIRING:** A French champagne, such as N.V. Laurent-Perrier, or a Chablis.

### **pan-fried trout with dilly beans**

For the vegetables:

1 pound fingerling potatoes,  
halved lengthwise

½ pound carrots, cut into  
large dice (about 1 cup)

1½ teaspoons extra-virgin  
olive oil

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground  
pepper

5 sprigs fresh lemon thyme  
(optional)

For the trout:

2 (1-pound) whole rainbow  
trout, filleted<sup>44</sup>

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 teaspoons unsalted butter

2 teaspoons high-heat  
vegetable oil

¼ cup dry white vermouth

For the coriander-lemon butter sauce:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon lemon zest

1 teaspoon whole coriander  
seeds, freshly ground in a

spice grinder

For serving:

Dilly Beans (recipe follows)

*I'm not sure what it is about trout, but it just loves potatoes and lemon and butter more passionately than other fish. The nuttiness of trout and butter left to bubble and brown in a cast-iron pan is just goodness writ large. If you are the plan-ahead sort, the dilly beans can be made up to a week ahead and the vegetables can be roasted the day before and just reheated. Then all you have to do the day of is spend ten minutes pan-frying the trout and making a simple sauce. The dilly beans offer a perfect piquancy to cut the richness of the sauce.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

To prepare the vegetables, place the potatoes and carrots on an oiled sheet pan. Toss them with the olive oil, salt, and pepper and spread out on the pan, placing the potatoes cut side down. Tuck the lemon thyme sprigs in and around the vegetables. Roast on the middle rack of the oven, uncovered, for 35 minutes, or until the vegetables are caramelized and tender. Discard the thyme sprigs. Keep the vegetables warm.

To prepare the trout, season the trout fillets generously with salt and pepper. Heat a large heavy sauté pan over high heat. Add half of the butter and vegetable oil, and cook 2 fillets, skin side up, for about 2 minutes, then flip and cook for another 2 minutes, or until lightly browned. Transfer to a platter and cover loosely with aluminum foil while you cook the other 2 fillets, using the remaining butter and oil. Transfer the fillets to the platter, turn off the heat, wait 1 minute for the pan to cool, and then add the vermouth, stirring to loosen any bits clinging to the pan. Then make the butter sauce in the same pan.

To prepare the sauce, add all of its ingredients to the pan and swirl them around just until you can smell the coriander, about 30 seconds. Pour over the trout fillets and serve with the roasted vegetables and Dilly Beans.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Matanzas Creek 2008, Sonoma County, California, or a Chablis.

## ***DILLY BEANS***

- ½ pound green beans, trimmed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup white vinegar or apple  
cider vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt

½ teaspoon whole coriander  
seeds  
½ teaspoon whole black  
peppercorns

SERVES 4

Place the green beans in a shallow heatproof container.

In a medium saucepan, combine the bay leaf, vinegar, water, sugar, salt, coriander seeds, and peppercorns, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour the hot vinegar mixture over the green beans, making sure the beans are fully submerged.

After the beans and vinegar have cooled, cover the container and refrigerate for at least 24 hours (the flavor improves after 48 hours). The beans will keep in the refrigerator for up to 10 days.



**quinoa cakes with smoked trout and chive sour cream**



⅔ cup quinoa, rinsed and drained  
1⅓ cups water  
Salt  
¼ cup minced shallots  
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ cup all-purpose flour<sup>45</sup>  
¼ cup feta cheese (I like Israeli or French sheep feta)  
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk  
Freshly ground pepper  
High-heat vegetable oil, for frying  
¼ cup plain Greek-style yogurt or sour cream  
2 tablespoons finely snipped fresh chives (reserve chive tips for garnish)  
4 ounces smoked trout, smoked salmon, or smoked char (see page 131 for instructions on how to smoke fish at home)

*Quinoa is the grain that makes you feel wholesome just pronouncing it correctly. It's fun to say—try it with me: keen-WAAAAA. It cooks up in fifteen minutes and has more protein than any other grain. It's easy to find good-quality smoked trout in most markets. This recipe is great as an appetizer but also makes for an unusual brunch if you make the cakes bigger and then poach or fry an egg and put that on top.*

**MAKES APPROXIMATELY 32 ONE-INCH CAKES**

Add the quinoa, water, and ½ teaspoon salt to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat, and simmer gently until the quinoa has absorbed the water, 12 to 15 minutes. Spread the quinoa out on a sheet pan to cool. While it cools, cook the shallots with the olive oil and a pinch of salt in a small skillet over medium-high heat for 5 minutes, or until the shallots have softened. In a large bowl, gently mix the cooled quinoa with the cooked shallots, flour, feta, parsley, egg, and egg yolk. Season with pepper.

Heat a large heavy skillet over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil. Lightly wet your hands. Scoop out a small amount of the quinoa mixture, press lightly into a ball, and then flatten into a cake. Fry the cakes until the bottoms are golden brown and crunchy, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Drain on a paper-towel-lined plate. Fry additional batches as needed.

In a small bowl, combine the yogurt and chives. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Place a small piece of smoked trout on each quinoa cake and garnish with a dollop of chive cream and a chive tip.

**PAIRING:** A vinho verde, such as Casal Garcia Branco White 2009, Portugal, or a brut champagne or sparkling wine.

### **stuffed trout with nettle-almond butter**

For the nettles:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup packed nettle leaves

For the nettle-almond butter:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup whole almonds

Zest of 1 lemon (about 2  
teaspoons)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

1 large clove garlic

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground  
pepper

For the stuffing:

1 carrot, peeled and then  
shaved into thin strips with  
the peeler

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh Italian parsley  
leaves

1 teaspoon fresh marjoram  
leaves

1 tablespoon roughly torn  
fresh mint leaves

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive  
oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the trout:

4 (1-pound) whole trout, head  
on, deboned<sup>[46](#)</sup>

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 lemons, cut into 12 thin  
slices

Toothpicks, to secure trout

2 tablespoons high-heat

vegetable oil

*I'll probably never be rich, but I'm lucky enough to be rich in friends, many of whom are chefs who feed me really, really well. I often take my work to some favorite restaurants and sit at their bars typing away and chatting with friends while eating some of Seattle's best food. The seat closest to the open kitchen at Tilikum Place Café's bar is one of my favorite perches. Chef Ba Culbert generously contributed this recipe, which I tweaked just a small bit. Ba's food is deliciously understated, showing perfectly executed technique. Her food reflects her personality: humble, balanced, and nurturing.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the nettles, bring a large pot of water to a boil. While the water heats, fill a medium bowl with ice water. When the water is boiling, using gloves, carefully add the nettle leaves, making sure they are submerged. Cook for exactly 5 minutes.

Remove them immediately with a slotted spoon or tongs and plunge them into the ice bath. When the nettles have cooled, remove them from the ice bath and with your hands squeeze out all the water. Set aside ¼ cup nettles to make the nettle butter, and chop the remaining ½ cup to stuff the trout.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To prepare the nettle-almond butter, spread the almonds on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for 10 minutes, or until they are lightly browned. Add the toasted almonds and reserved ¼ cup nettles to the bowl of a food processor and pulse for 2 minutes, scraping the mixture down as needed. Add the lemon zest, butter, garlic, salt, and pepper, and pulse for another 2 minutes, or until the butter has achieved a smooth consistency. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Increase the oven temperature to 400°F.

To prepare the stuffing, in a small bowl, combine the carrots, reserved ½ cup chopped nettles, parsley, marjoram, mint, and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To prepare the trout, season the insides of the trout with salt and pepper. Stuff the cavities with equal parts of the carrot mixture. Lay 3 lemon slices on top of the carrot mixture inside each trout. Secure the trout closed with a few toothpicks. Season the outside of the fish with salt and pepper.

To finish the dish, heat two large cast-iron skillets over high heat and add a tablespoon of vegetable oil to each skillet. When the oil is very hot, carefully place 2 stuffed trout in each skillet. Cook on one side for 5 minutes, or until browned in spots. Very carefully flip the trout over and put the skillets in the oven; cook for another 5 minutes. Take the skillets out of the oven, and turn the broiler on high. Top each trout with about 2 tablespoons of the nettle-almond butter. Just before serving, slide the skillets under the broiler for just a moment to melt and brown the butter.

**PAIRING:** An albariño, such as Fifiñanes 2008, Rías Baixas, Spain, or an Austrian grüner veltliner.



**albacore tuna**



***I stared blankly at my friend,*** trying to look knowledgeable. She asked me if I wanted to go in on buying whole local albacore tuna and wondered if I would teach her how to fillet it, which, admittedly, I had never done before. The fish were coming in whole and ungutted off a local boat. “Sure,” I told her, “I’d love to,” and then I hurried off to spend an hour on YouTube, where I found numerous people with wildly different techniques for filleting whole tuna. I picked up a few tips and then sharpened my knives. I pantomimed my attack strategy, looking more like a demented ninja with an inadequate sword than a seasoned albacore filleter.

The day came and I met my friends at Fishermen’s Terminal, where we selected whole fish directly off the boat. On a hot August afternoon we set up a makeshift albacore-processing line. We all took a turn practicing the techniques of gutting, cleaning, skinning, and filleting. It was messy work and “fragrant” at that (gutting fish carries with it a certain special value-added olfactory experience). I saved a few heads for crab bait, and we buried the bones and tails in the yard, deep enough so the dogs wouldn’t find this special treat. The loins, four beautiful rosy pink cuts per fish, were vacuum-sealed in bags marked for our different freezers and packed on ice in coolers. We toasted our stinky, messy selves with a cold, crisp beer, while flies buzzed over our heads, mistaking us for dead fish. And really, who could blame them?

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** encourage you to seek out Pacific Coast troll (or pole)-caught and line-caught albacore tuna. Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch lists it as a “Best Choice,” and the Marine Stewardship Council calls it a “best environmental choice.” There are several reasons why we should support this fishery: 1) It has low bycatch levels because the fish are caught individually and inspected one by one. 2) It has low mercury levels because it targets younger albacore (see Fish With the Highest Levels of Mercury and POPs on page 237 for a discussion of mercury in seafood). 3) Pacific albacore stocks are not depleted the way they are in the North Atlantic and other regions. A second option, considered a Seafood Watch “Good Choice” would be Hawaiian-caught long-line albacore. The United States has better bycatch regulations in place than long-line fisheries worldwide (though this method is still not ideal).

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*), aka canned white tuna, is also called tombo (in Hawaii you might see it called tombo ahi), longfin tunny, or, in Japan, *shiro maguro* or *bin’naga maguro*.

**SEASON:** July to September.

**BUYING TIPS:** Albacore tuna is very soft when raw and firms up as it cooks. Treat it gently when raw to prevent bruising and tearing. The meat of fresh albacore should be bright, from a white-pink to deeper pink color, and have no blood spots/bruising. The texture will be soft and oily. Whole albacore shouldn’t have dents or dings in the skin (a sign of poor handling).

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** Where is this tuna from? Look for U.S. Pacific Coast albacore. How was it caught? Prioritize troll-or line-caught. As a second

choice, look for Hawaiian long-line caught.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** When I get any fish fillet home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** Albacore is a highly migratory species; consequently, trollers target whole schools of fish. Bait is often thrown over the side to keep the school close by as the tuna are caught one by one with hooks and lines.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Use another meaty firm or semi-firm fish; halibut or salmon come to mind.

### **albacore niçoise**

8 plum tomatoes, halved  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin  
olive oil, plus additional for  
serving the salad  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
5 sprigs lemon or regular  
thyme  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  pound fingerling potatoes,  
halved, or 1 large Yukon  
Gold potato, skin on, cut  
into large dice  
1 (6-ounce) can troll-caught  
albacore in extra-virgin olive  
oil, drained, 1 tablespoon of  
the oil reserved  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
Juice of 1 lemon (about 3  
tablespoons)  
Leaves from 1 head butter  
lettuce  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup *niçoise* olives  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  pound Dilly Beans (page  
155)

4 hard-boiled eggs, cut in half  
4 pieces toasted crusty bread

*Salade niçoise is a traditional salad that originated in Nice, France. It is a “composed” salad, meaning a dish where you can show your guests your personality type. Anal types will place each ingredient in efficient, color-coordinated piles, most likely not touching each other. Laissez-faire types will have everything piled randomly on the platter. I leave this up to you and your therapist.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 300°F.

In a medium bowl, toss the tomatoes with the olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the tomatoes to a sheet pan lined with parchment paper, tucking the lemon thyme sprigs under the tomatoes. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the tomatoes are semidried and lightly caramelized.

Meanwhile, place the potatoes in a small pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Salt the water generously. Cook until the potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Drain the potatoes and put them in a small bowl. Add the reserved tuna oil and mustard. Season to taste with pepper and 1 teaspoon of the lemon juice, reserving the remainder to dress the salad. Mix well and set aside.

On a platter, according to your nature, arrange the lettuce, tuna, potatoes, slow-roasted tomatoes, olives, Dilly Beans, and eggs. Drizzle the remaining lemon juice and olive oil over the salad, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with the toasted bread drizzled with more olive oil.

**PAIRING:** A vinho verde, such as NV Broadbent, Portugal, or a muscadet.

### **albacore parcels with mint-pistachio pesto**

For the mint-pistachio pesto:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup shelled pistachios  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sliced almonds  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon red pepper flakes  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup packed fresh mint leaves  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the tuna:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus additional for brushing the parchment  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  small red onion, thinly sliced into half moons (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
Parchment paper or aluminum foil

1 pound albacore loin, cut into  
4 steaks  
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

*I learned how to make a version of the mint-pistachio pesto from watching a Martha Stewart show, and it has become part of my regular rotation: tossed into pasta salads, served alongside grilled fish, or conveyed to my mouth by any means necessary—it's that good. Next time you go car camping, make this recipe in foil parcels. Keep them on ice until you get to your destination, then grill them for 8 minutes over a strong fire.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To prepare the pesto, spread the pistachios out on a baking sheet and add the almonds at the far end. Toast in the oven for 4 minutes, then check to see if the pistachios are lightly brown. If not, roast them for another minute or two. The almonds will take longer, 6 to 8 minutes total. Leave the oven on.

When the nuts are toasted, transfer them to the bowl of a food processor, along with the olive oil, red pepper flakes, and mint. Pulse into a chunky or smooth pesto: your choice. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and set aside.

To prepare the tuna, heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and then the onions. Add a pinch of salt and sauté for about 5 minutes, or until the onions are lightly browned. Divide into 4 equal portions and set aside.

Increase the oven temperature to 450°F.

Cut four 18-inch lengths of parchment paper (or you can make this in foil parcels, crinkling the edges to keep the liquids in—parchment is recommended purely because it makes for a lovely presentation when served). Fold each piece of parchment in half and trace a large, fat half-heart shape on each one. Cut out the shapes.

Open the parchment papers and brush one side of each heart lightly with olive oil. Lay a tuna steak on each oiled section and top with a little sprinkling of salt and pepper, followed by 2 tablespoons of mint-pistachio pesto, ¼ cup of the cherry tomatoes, and a quarter of the sautéed red onions. Fold the other half of the parchment over the fish and, starting at the top of the paper, make a small fold to crease the 2 sides together. Locate the midpoint of your fold and make another fold that starts there. Repeat, continuing around the whole outer edge of the paper. When you get to the end, tuck what's left securely under the parcel. The idea is to trap the steam, so look at all your creases and make sure no steam can escape. Place the parchment parcels on a baking sheet, and, for medium-rare albacore, cook for 8 minutes for each inch of tuna (measured at its thickest point).

To serve, place one parcel on each plate and let your guests open them at the table. (Scissors or knives may be needed for parchment parcels; foil is easy to open without.)

**PAIRING:** An albariño, such as Burgans 2009, Rías Baixas, Spain, or a grüner veltliner.

### **olive-oil-poached albacore steaks with caper–blood orange sauce**

2 cups plus 1 tablespoon extra-



virgin olive oil  
1 pound albacore loin, cut into  
four 1-inch steaks  
2 blood or navel oranges  
½ small red onion, thinly sliced  
into half moons (about ½ cup)  
Pinch of salt  
1 teaspoon minced fresh  
rosemary  
⅛ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons dry white  
vermouth or dry white wine  
¼ cup mild green olives (such  
as Castelvetrano), pitted and  
sliced into thin strips  
1½ tablespoons chopped  
capers  
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian  
parsley  
¼ cup shelled pistachios, for  
garnish  
2 cups arugula

*I think one reason people shy away from oil-poached anything is that they probably have an evolutionarily hard-wired fear of that much hot oil. It's probably a self-protection thing, but let me gently walk you through a decidedly safe preparation. The oil never gets very hot in this recipe—precisely why the tuna ends up moist and succulent. Another reason people shy away from oil poaching is because they think they need to throw away the oil when they are done. Not true! Strain it, refrigerate it, and use it for cooking. It will keep for months in the refrigerator. Now that I've soothed your fears, proceed gaily forward into a world of meltingly tender tuna with fruity and piquant olives, blood oranges, and a wisp of chile-induced heat, felt just for a moment at the back of the throat, to remind you that you're still very much alive.*

SERVES 4

In a medium, deep saucepot, heat 2 cups of the olive oil over medium-low heat until it registers 230°F on a deep-fat thermometer. Add the tuna steaks, two at a time, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes (don't adjust the heat—it's OK if the temperature drops): 3 minutes for rare, 4 minutes for medium rare, 5 minutes for medium (I recommend rare or medium rare). When the first 2 steaks are done, remove them from the oil with tongs and transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate. Return the oil to 230°F and cook the other steaks. Reserve and set aside the poaching oil while you prepare the sauce.

Zest the blood oranges to yield  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon zest. Then juice the oranges to yield  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup juice, and cut the remaining flesh into small dice to yield  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.

In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the red onions and salt. Sauté for 6 to 7 minutes, or until the onions are soft, then add the blood orange juice and zest, rosemary, red pepper flakes, red wine vinegar, vermouth, olives, and capers, and sauté for another minute or so. Add the parsley and blood orange pieces, stir well, and taste for seasoning. Keep warm.



Toast the pistachios in a small skillet over high heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.

To serve, place some arugula on each of 4 plates. Drizzle a few teaspoons of the reserved poaching oil over the arugula and sprinkle with a touch of salt. Top with an albacore steak (sliced, if desired) and spoon the caper–blood orange sauce over the top. Garnish with the toasted pistachios.

**PAIRING:** An Oregon pinot gris, such as Elk Cove 2008, Willamette Valley, or a Torrontés.



### **seared albacore with ratatouille and caramelized figs**

For the ratatouille:

3 teaspoons extra-virgin  
olive oil, plus additional for  
sautéing

3 teaspoons high-heat  
vegetable oil, plus additional-  
for sautéing

1 small eggplant, cut into  
small dice

Salt

1 medium zucchini, cut into  
small dice

1 red pepper, cut into small  
dice

1 medium Walla Walla onion,  
cut into half moons

1 teaspoon minced fresh  
thyme

1 teaspoon minced fresh  
parsley

1 teaspoon minced fresh  
oregano

1 teaspoon minced fresh  
rosemary

Freshly ground pepper

For the tuna:

1 pound albacore loin, cut  
into four 1-inch steaks

Salt and freshly ground



pepper  
2 tablespoons high-heat  
vegetable oil  
6 fresh figs, halved  
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

For the red-wine-and-balsamic sauce:

1 cup dry red wine  
½ cup clam juice or chicken  
stock  
3 tablespoons balsamic  
vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

*August is a time of such intense, overflowing bounty that we are literally buried in produce. In times of extreme fecundity, I make recipes that include, at the minimum, 56,782 pounds of produce. This seems to be the best strategy to stay ahead of nature. Some people make gazpacho; I make ratatouille. Caramelize some fresh figs and serve with a medium-rare albacore steak, ratatouille, and a red-wine-and-balsamic reduction and you only have 56,781 pounds of produce left to eat.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the ratatouille, heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add 1 teaspoon each of the olive oil and vegetable oil. Add the eggplant and salt, and sauté for 7 to 8 minutes, or until the eggplant is lightly browned and soft. Transfer to a large bowl. Add another teaspoon each of the olive oil and vegetable oil, and sauté the zucchini in the same fashion. Add it to the eggplant. Repeat the process with the red pepper and onion. Stir the cooked vegetables together; add the thyme, parsley, oregano, and rosemary; and season to taste with pepper and more salt if necessary.

To prepare the tuna, heat a large skillet over high heat. Season the albacore steaks with salt and pepper. Add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil to the skillet and, when it is hot, sear the tuna for exactly 2½ minutes on each side, for a juicy medium rare. Transfer the steaks to a platter and cover lightly with aluminum foil to keep warm. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and, when it is hot, sear the figs, cut side down, until they are brown, about 2 minutes. Flip them over, add the cherry tomatoes, and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, or until the tomatoes are lightly charred. Transfer the figs and tomatoes to the platter with the steaks and place the skillet back over the heat to prepare the sauce.





To prepare the sauce, add the wine to the warm skillet you cooked the albacore and figs in. Reduce the wine by half, about 5 minutes. Add the clam juice and balsamic vinegar and reduce to a light



syrup, about 3 minutes more. Season to taste with salt and pepper as needed.  
To serve, on each of 4 plates, place an albacore steak with some figs and tomatoes and a heaping pile of ratatouille. Drizzle some of the pan sauce around the plate.  
**PAIRING:** A red Burgundy, such as R. Dubois “Vieilles Vignes” 2008, or a rosé.



### **gin-and-tonic-cured albacore with dandelion crackers and lime cream**

For the gin-and-tonic-cured albacore:

2 teaspoons black peppercorns  
1 teaspoon juniper berries  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup kosher salt  
1 teaspoon lime zest  
3 tablespoons light brown sugar  
1 tablespoon gin  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds albacore loin, cut into a rectangular block no more than 1 inch thick (use trimmings to poach for *niçoise* salad or eat as sashimi)

For the lime cream:

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup cream cheese  
Pinch of salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon lime zest  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons milk

For serving:

6 Dandelion Crackers (recipe follows)

*Before you think I'm encouraging you to dunk some tuna into a gin and tonic, I was merely inspired by the juniper, gin, and lime in one of my favorite adult beverages. Curing of the albacore*

*is done much like you'd cure salmon for a traditional gravlax preparation. I hate to pick favorites, but this is one of my most cherished recipes in this book. It requires some advanced planning but not a lot of active work. You can make the lime cream the same day you cure the fish, the next day you can prepare the crackers and store them in an airtight container, and on the third day you can kick back with a gin and tonic and reap the rewards.*

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS AN APPETIZER

To prepare the albacore, grind the peppercorns, juniper berries, and kosher salt together in a spice grinder. Mix the ground spices with the lime zest and brown sugar in a small bowl. Place a piece of plastic wrap on the counter and spread half of the peppercorn mixture onto the plastic. Sprinkle with 1½ teaspoons of the gin, then lay the fillet on top of that. Sprinkle the tuna with the remaining 1½ teaspoons gin and then spread the rest of the peppercorn mixture on top of the tuna. Wrap tightly, place in a dish that will hold any juices that may escape, position a few heavy cans on top of the fillet to weigh it down, and place in the refrigerator.

Every day, for three days, flip the wrapped fillet. At the end of the three days, wipe the majority of the cure off the albacore with a damp paper towel and slice the fish as thin as possible.

To prepare the cream, blend the cream cheese, salt, lime zest, and milk in the bowl of a food processor or by hand until well mixed.

There are a couple of ways to serve this dish. You can lay the albacore slices on a platter, place the Dandelion Crackers in a basket, and pass the lime cream around for people to assemble as they wish. Alternatively, you can break the Dandelion Crackers into bite-size pieces, place an albacore slice on top, and garnish with a small dollop of lime cream.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Efesté “Feral” 2008, Columbia Valley, Washington, or a gin and tonic, naturally.

## ***DANDELION CRACKERS***

¾ cup semolina flour  
¾ cup all-purpose flour, plus  
additional for dusting the  
baking sheet  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon sugar  
½ cup warm water  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin  
olive oil, plus additional for  
brushing crackers  
⅓ cup dandelion petals,  
pansies, or nasturtiums<sup>[47](#)</sup>  
Cornmeal, for dusting the baking-  
sheets (optional)



Coarse sea salt, for sprinkling  
the crackers

## MAKES 6 EXTRA-LARGE CRACKERS

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, salt, and sugar. Add the water, olive oil, and dandelion petals. In a stand mixer with a dough hook attachment, add the dough and mix at medium speed for 5 to 7 minutes. (If the dough doesn't come together into a loose ball, add more water 1 tablespoon at a time.) Alternatively, knead by hand on a floured countertop.

The dough should be just a bit tacky: not too dry, not too sticky to work with. If you need to add a bit more water (or flour) to achieve this, do so.

Shape the dough into a large ball and divide into 6 equal portions. Gently rub each piece with a bit of olive oil, shape into a small ball, and place on a plate. Cover with a clean dishtowel or plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes to 1 hour. While the dough is resting, preheat the oven to 425°F. Place a pizza stone, if you have one, in the oven.

When the dough is ready, flatten the dough balls. Using a rolling pin or a pasta machine, shape them into flat strips. Pull the dough out a bit thinner by hand (the way you might pull pizza dough). You can also leave the cracker dough in long strips or cut it into whatever shape you like at this point.

Set the crackers on baking sheets dusted with flour or cornmeal, poking each with the tines of a fork to prevent puffing. Brush them with olive oil, and sprinkle with sea salt. If you are using a pizza stone, transfer the crackers directly onto it and bake in batches. If you don't have a pizza stone, bake the crackers on the baking sheets. Bake until deeply golden, about 10 minutes, and let cool before eating. The crackers will crisp as they cool.





# PIKE PL

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arctic char



**Arctic char is the smart, well-dressed girl** in the corner of the room who's quiet and subtle and doesn't hit you over the head with her confidence, yet everyone in the room (especially her) knows she's got it all going on. Sure, the sexy salmon gets all the attention with her flashy red dress, but that's so very (*yawn*) predictable. When I was first introduced to arctic char, I was drawn in by her gorgeous pink and white dots—her playful summer skirt like a party dress from the '50s.

Arctic char is a chameleon, both a freshwater fish and a saltwater fish. She keeps you guessing. She's tough and can survive in deep, frigid lakes. She can sometimes leave you cold but never bored. Arctic char used to be elusive—a rare fish in the wild—but she's increasingly available down home and local on the farm. Salmon may be sexy, but that char, she's coy and special and dependable: she's the marrying kind.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**An elusive and beautiful species that is similar to salmon and trout, arctic char was the dominant species in the Arctic for centuries and a significant food of the Inuit. Arctic char is farmed in land-based closed systems where escape is rare. Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch ranks arctic char as a "Best Choice."

**BY ANY OTHER NAME**Arctic char (sometimes spelled "charr") (*Salvelinus alpinus* ) is also called *iwana* and alpine char.

**SEASON:** Year-round, though 2009 landslides at one of the largest arctic char farms in North America (Washington's Cascade Aqua Farms) has put the kibosh on a consistent source of locally farmed char until 2011. Supply is anticipated to ratchet back up at that time.

**BUYING TIPS:** Arctic char has thin skin and tiny scales that do not need to be removed. Make sure the skin glistens, the eyes are not sunken, and the flesh bounces back when you gently press on it.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET**it farmed? Arctic char is one of the most sustainably farmed fish out there. Where did it come from? Try to buy fish grown as close to your home as possible. When was it harvested? As with all fish, you'll want to make sure it hasn't been sitting around for very long (unless it's properly frozen). Up to five days from harvest is my usual window, but the nose always knows.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH**When I get any fish fillet home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan (a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the fillet is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED**Arctic char is farmed in a highly controlled environment (think high-tech aquariums) where the water is cleaned, filtered, and

then recycled back through the system; this recirculated water is replenished only when too much water has been lost through evaporation.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** Coho, pink, or chum salmon or farmed rainbow trout are excellent substitutes for arctic char. In fact, feel free to use all the recipes in the trout and char chapters interchangeably.



### **pan-fried char with crispy mustard crust**

1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
¼ teaspoon brown mustard  
seeds  
1 pound arctic char fillet,  
skinned<sup>48</sup> and cut into 4 equal  
portions  
½ cup panko  
½ tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon  
freshly grated lemon zest  
(from 1 large lemon)  
¼ cup finely chopped fresh  
Italian parsley  
½ teaspoon salt  
Pinch of cayenne  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter,  
softened  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

*As much as chefs love fancy recipes, the simplest ones inevitably get the most radio play. This dish goes wonderfully with some simple steamed broccoli or broccolini. If for some weird reason you have leftovers from this dinner, run out and get a good baguette or ciabatta roll and smear it with an herb mayonnaise or some leftover lemon butter, some lovely butter lettuce, and a slice of beefsteak tomato. You will have yourself one fabulous fish sandwich.*

**SERVES 4**

In a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, mustard, and mustard seeds. Brush this mixture on both



sides of the char fillets. In another small bowl, combine the panko, ½ tablespoon of the lemon zest, parsley, ¼ teaspoon of the salt, and cayenne. Transfer the panko mixture to a plate and coat the char fillets with the crumbs on both sides.

In a small bowl, mix the butter with the remaining 1 teaspoon lemon zest and the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt. Set aside.

Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is hot, gently slide the fillets into the pan, skinned side up. Cook for 8 to 9 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). Most char fillets are less than an inch at their thickest point, so I recommend starting with 3 minutes per side, then setting the fillets aside and covering with foil. After 5 minutes of resting, they will most likely be moist and perfectly done.

To serve, place ½ tablespoon of lemon butter on top of each piece of char.

**PAIRING:** A sauvignon blanc, such as Cakebread 2008, Napa Valley, California, or a Chablis.







**char with grilled romaine, grapes, and balsamic vinegar**

High-heat vegetable oil, for  
oiling the grill  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
1 bunch romaine lettuce, cut  
through the core into 4 equal  
portions  
1 pound arctic char fillet, cut  
into 4 equal portions  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
4 slices good crusty bread  
½ small red onion, sliced into  
paper-thin half moons (about  
½ cup)  
½ cup halved and seeded wine  
or tart table grapes  
¼ cup balsamic vinegar

*I remember the first time someone told me about a grilled romaine salad. I believe I turned my nose up at the thought. I couldn't get past the idea of cooked warm lettuce. Blech. Luckily, I will try anything once, and I'm so glad I did. Now a whole world has opened up, and that world includes smoking greens like escarole and frisée (see Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce on page 203). This is a very simple recipe for a late-summer or early-fall evening.*

SERVES 4

Oil the rack of a grill with vegetable oil and heat it until it is very hot.

With your hands, rub 1 tablespoon of the olive oil all over the romaine sections and the char. Season with salt and pepper. Grill the romaine until it is wilted and slightly charred, 5 to 7 minutes, turning as needed. Transfer to a plate and set aside. Grill the char fillets starting skin side up, for a total cooking time of 8 to 9 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point). Transfer to a plate, cover, and set aside. Grill the bread and set aside.

Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat and add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add the red onions and sauté for 5 to 7 minutes, or until the onions are caramelized. Add the grapes and balsamic vinegar, and cook until the vinegar evaporates, 2 to 3 minutes.

Spoon the onion-grape mixture over the grilled fish and romaine, and serve with the grilled bread.

**PAIRING:** A Soave Classico, such as Inama Vigneti di Foscario 2008, Veneto, Italy, or a vernaccia.

### **char katsu with ponzu sauce and cucumber-hijiki salad**

For the ponzu sauce:

1½ cups water



⅓ ounce (about ¾ cup) dried bonito flakes, also known as *katsuobushi*  
⅓ cup soy sauce  
¼ cup freshly squeezed citrus juice (a mixture of lemon/lime and even grapefruit is nice)  
1 tablespoon seasoned rice wine vinegar

For the char katsu:

1 pound arctic char fillet, skinned<sup>49</sup> and cut into 4 equal portions  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 egg, beaten  
½ cup panko  
¼ cup high-heat vegetable oil  
Cucumber-Hijiki Salad (recipe follows)  
4 cups cooked rice

*I was lucky enough to go to the Seattle Culinary Academy, where one of my favorite instructors was K. G. Miyata, a champion ice carver in his native Japan, and as far as I'm concerned, the fastest hands with a knife ever. I got what many other culinary school grads don't: a really nice background in Japanese cuisine and sushi making. This recipe goes out to you, chef K. G.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the ponzu sauce, put the water in a deep pot and heat over medium-high heat. Just before the water boils, add the bonito flakes and turn off the heat. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface. Let the bonito sit in the water for 10 minutes. Strain the stock into a small bowl through a coffee filter or tea towel.

Take ⅓ cup of the stock (save the rest for use in soups or marinades) and mix it with the soy sauce, citrus juice, and rice wine vinegar in a medium bowl. Set aside.

To prepare the char katsu, lightly season the char fillets with salt and pepper. Set up a plate with the fish, a plate with the flour, a bowl for the egg, a plate for the panko, and a final plate for the coated fillets. Using one hand for wet ingredients and one hand for dry, bread the fillets by patting them into the flour and tapping off the excess, dipping them into the egg and letting the excess run off, and, finally, coating them in the panko.

Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the vegetable oil, and when it is hot, fry the fish

fillets until brown on both sides, about 4 minutes each side, for a total cooking time of about 8 minutes per inch of fish (measured at its thickest point).

This is casual, family-friendly food. Place the fillets on a platter with a small bowl of ponzu sauce and a spoon. Pass the Cucumber-Hijiki Salad and rice separately.

**PAIRING:** A riesling, such as Poet's Leap 2008, Columbia Valley, Washington, or a Junmai-shu sake.

## ***CUCUMBER-HIJIKI SALAD***

1 English cucumber, sliced in  
half lengthwise, then sliced  
into thin half moons  
2 tablespoons hijiki, [50](#) rehydrated  
in hot water for 10 minutes  
and strained  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh  
mint  
1 tablespoon orange zest (from  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  orange)  
3 tablespoons seasoned rice  
wine vinegar  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons toasted  
sesame oil  
1 teaspoon chile oil [51](#)  
Salt

SERVES 4

In a large bowl, combine the cucumber, hijiki, and mint. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the orange zest, rice wine vinegar, and oils; toss with the salad. Let the salad sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes before serving. Taste for salt and adjust as needed.





**char with roasted cauliflower and apple-vanilla vinaigrette**



For the vegetables:

1 head cauliflower, stemmed  
1 cup medium-diced apple,  
peel left on  
½ small red onion, cut into half  
moons (about ½ cup)  
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground  
pepper  
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian  
parsley

For the cauliflower purée:

Reserved cauliflower half  
2 tablespoons milk  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For the apple-vanilla vinaigrette:

¼ cup apple juice  
¼ cup clam juice  
½ vanilla bean, sliced length-  
wise down the middle, seeds  
scraped  
¼ cup dry white vermouth  
2 tablespoons apple cider  
vinegar  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil

For the arctic char:

1 pound arctic char fillet, skin  
on, cut into 4 equal portions  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

*One night at a restaurant, I was served a single scallop with a butter sauce made with vanilla bean. I remember staring at the little flecks of vanilla seed and secretly dragging my finger through the sauce, thinking that I would have never thought vanilla would pair so well with seafood. But it really worked. When developing recipes for this book, I found that the sweetness of the vanilla needs to hang on something to keep the dish from becoming cloying—and that is where an earthy hook comes in here with the cauliflower. This dish demands a chilly fall evening when cauliflower is in season and you have a bowl of local apples to pick from.*



SERVES 4

To prepare the vegetables, preheat the oven to 400°F.

Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. Cut the head of cauliflower in half. Cut one of the halves into ¼-inch slices (reserving the other half for the purée). Spread the cauliflower slices, apple, and onion on the sheet pan. Drizzle with the olive oil, then sprinkle the salt and pepper over the top. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, or until the cauliflower browns on one side. Remove from the oven and toss with the parsley. Set aside and keep warm.

To prepare the cauliflower purée, bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Salt the water generously and then cook the reserved cauliflower half until tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain the cauliflower, chop it coarsely, and purée it and the milk in a food processor or blender until very smooth. Season the purée to taste with salt and pepper, starting with ¼ teaspoon salt and adding more if necessary. Transfer the purée to a bowl, cover with foil, and keep warm.

To prepare the vinaigrette, add the apple juice, clam juice, vanilla bean and seeds, vermouth, and apple cider vinegar to a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer until the liquid reduces to 3 tablespoons, about 10 minutes. Discard the vanilla bean. Transfer the liquid to a blender and, with the motor running, stream in the olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and transfer the vinaigrette to a squeeze bottle. [52](#)

To prepare the char, season both sides of the fillets with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add the vegetable oil and, when it is hot, carefully place the fillets skin side down in the pan. Cook for about 3 minutes, or until the skin crisps. Carefully flip the fish over and cook for another minute. Remove from the heat.

Place a large spoonful of cauliflower purée on each of 4 plates, and top with a piece of char, skin side up. Distribute the roasted vegetables over and around the fish, then drizzle the vinaigrette all around the plate.

**PAIRING:** A pinot gris, such as Paul Kubler “K” 2007, Alsace, France, or a Savennières.

### **smoked char with huckleberry and purslane salad**

For the smoked char:

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon brown sugar

Heaping ¼ teaspoon freshly  
ground pepper

1 pound arctic char fillet, cut  
into 4 equal portions

For the huckleberry and purslane salad:

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

¼ small red onion, cored, sliced

into paper-thin half moons

(about ¼ cup)

4 cups purslane,<sup>[53](#)</sup> or watercress  
or arugula with a few chopped  
sorrel leaves  
2 tablespoons fresh huckleber-  
ries<sup>[54](#)</sup> or dried unsweetened  
blueberries  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

*If the appearance of three smoked fish recipes in this book is any indication, I'm sort of a smoked fish lover. It's in my blood: just as surely as wood smoke curls through the culture of Native Americans on the West Coast come salmon season, East Coast Jews know from good smoked fish. The key, in my humble opinion, is to use wood that doesn't overpower the inherent flavor of the fish. I want to feel like I was fishing and caught a gentle whiff of someone's campfire from way, way down the beach. I prefer alder or cherry; but go ahead and use loads of mesquite, if you want your fish to taste like bitter charcoal and a few burning houses and not much else.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the char, combine the salt, brown sugar, and pepper in a small bowl. Coat the char fillets with the mixture, wrap them in plastic wrap, and store them in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

To prepare the huckleberry and purslane salad, in a large bowl, pour the red wine vinegar over the onions. Let them pickle at room temperature for an hour, stirring occasionally. When the onions have finished marinating, drain them, reserving the vinegar.

Smoke the char fillets according to the instructions on page 131.<sup>[55](#)</sup>

Toss the purslane with the huckleberries and pickled red onions. Drizzle with the olive oil and a teaspoon or two of the pickling vinegar. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, divide the salad evenly between 4 plates, break the char into large pieces, and scatter them over the top. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A pinot grigio, such as Borgo M 2008, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy, or an Oregon pinot gris.

# LITTLE FISH & EGGS







**sardines**



**When the last large sardine cannery** in the United States, Maine's Stinson Seafood, shut its doors in 2010 after 135 years of operation, our country's culinary relationship with the sardine was threatened, but it did not die. In just the last year, there has been a resurgence in the collective attention on the silvery little fish. Lots of the excited talk circles around the healthful qualities of the sardine: it's high in protein, high in omega-3 fatty acids, and extremely low in mercury and other pollutants. That's all good news, but what gets me excited about the humble sardine is its incomparable flavor.

When the rain finally abates in the Pacific Northwest (late spring or early summer), fresh sardines start appearing at one of my favorite fish shops in Seattle, Mutual Fish. I head there with the unbounded glee of a kid in a candy store, but first I call my friends to rally the troops. It's a special, fleeting time of the year: as with many fish, sardines have a short season. The ones we see on the West Coast usually hail from California, and they are fabulous and flashy in their own way, light glinting off their silvery flanks. My friends and I snatch them up and meet up later for dinner; some of the sardines get smoked, some pan-fried, others grilled. It's fresh sardine season in Seattle—the silver eagle has landed.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**Wow, let me count the ways. Sardines are extremely low in mercury and PCBs, high in omega-3 fatty acids, and once again abundant—and through good management should remain so. (Though be aware: Scientists have shown sardines and anchovies experience a natural boom-and-bust cycle every thirty to forty years due to oceanic conditions and water temperature.) The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch places sardines on its "Super Green" list—the Academy Awards of sustainable seafood. To be selected, a fish must already be on the Seafood Watch's "Best Choice" list, have at least 250 milligrams of omega-3s in an 8-ounce serving, and contain low levels of mercury (less than 216 ppb) and PCBs (less than 11 ppb). Congratulations, humble silvery sardine: you got yourself an Oscar.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME**Sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) is also called pilchard or *iwashi* (in sushi bars).

**SEASON:** The season depends on when the various sardine stocks travel up the Pacific Coast, but generally, prime season is January through August (with some fresh sardines still available into October). Of course, canned are available year-round.

**BUYING TIPS**Fresh sardines are incredible and knock-your-socks-off delicious, but they are also delicate little flowers and don't have the shelf life of other, sturdier species. You'll want really, really freshly caught sardines: three days out of the water max—maybe four if they were handled very well.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET**Are these Pacific Coast sardines? Again, management around the world is not as strict as U.S. management, so it's better—for many reasons—to buy domestic. Where and when were they caught?

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH** Because fresh sardines are especially perishable, keep them very, very cold and eat them the day you buy them.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED** Sardines are generally harvested by purse seining, which carries with it very little risk of bycatch. Gill-netting and midwater trawling are other ways sardines can be caught.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES** Anchovies are a good stand-in, though keep in mind they are smaller, more intensely flavored, and when canned or tinned, much saltier. Mackerel is another good substitute.



### **dad's sardines on crackers with caramelized onions**

1 (4-ounce) tin sardines,  
canned in extra-virgin olive  
oil  
1 tablespoon dried currants  
1 tablespoon gin  
½ cup small-diced red onion  
Pinch of salt  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin  
olive oil  
Freshly ground pepper  
Dijon mustard, for spreading  
on crackers  
2 tablespoons finely chopped  
fresh Italian parsley

*I was raised by a committee of loving folks consisting of the chair (my dad), co-chairs (my grandparents), and board members (my aunt and our “housekeeper” Louise, who did so much more than just keep house). Louise is Jamaican, and friends used to tell me that I had a slight Jamaican accent when I was a kid because she was one of my constant companions. Apparently, as the story goes, Louise misinterpreted a story my dad told her about a trip to England where he was served kippers for breakfast. I think she thought my dad wanted that, and so, occasionally, I’d be woken up by the smell of fish frying in a pan at 6:30 a.m. Sometimes it would be sardines for breakfast. I don’t think my dad had the heart to tell her he liked littlefish—but not with his*

*morning coffee. This recipe goes out to Louise with love, wherever she may be (on earth or beyond), and to my dad, who raised me to be a good eater and stuck with me through the picky years.*

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS AN APPETIZER

Remove the sardines from the tin, discarding the oil, and place them in a bowl. Get the currants drunk by floating them in the gin.

Caramelize the onions by cooking them, along with the salt, in the olive oil in a small sauté pan over medium-high heat. Keep cooking them until they get very soft and light brown. If they get too dry, add some water to prevent them from burning. It should take 15 to 20 minutes for the onions to get good and sweet.

OK, you're in the home stretch now—just mash up those sardines with a fork, add the drunk currants and the caramelized onions, and season generously with pepper. Eat the sardines on crackers with Dijon mustard and the parsley garnish. If you're really cool, you'll eat them for breakfast, like my dad did.

**PAIRING:** A vermentino, such as Antinori 2007, Bolgheri, Italy, or a rosé.

### **white bean and sardine salad with fried eggs**

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
¼ small red onion, cored, sliced  
into paper-thin half moons  
(about ¼ cup)  
1 (4-ounce) tin sardines, canned  
in extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
2 cups bread cubes  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 cup cooked white beans  
(canned is OK)  
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian  
parsley  
4 eggs  
Butter, for frying the eggs  
¼ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano  
curls (made using a vegetable  
peeler)

*This recipe makes use of humble ingredients that can be picked up, last I checked, at a gas station. There is really nothing gourmet about them—in fact, for not much money, a tin of sardines, a can*

*of beans, an egg, and some bread make for an extremely simple and healthful meal. I have prepared this recipe for sworn “sardine-haters,” and well, expect to hate no more.*

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Pour the red wine vinegar over the onions. Let them pickle at room temperature for at least 30 minutes (1 hour is better), stirring occasionally. When the onions are done, drain them, squeezing out any liquid and reserving it for other uses.

Remove the sardines from the tin, discarding the oil, and place them in a bowl. Pour the sherry vinegar over the sardines and let them hang out for a bit while you make the croutons.

In a large bowl, toss the bread cubes with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and then season to taste with salt and pepper. Spread the croutons on a baking sheet and bake them in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes, or until they are crisp and lightly browned. Set aside.

Drain the sardines and pour the vinegar into a big bowl with the croutons, beans, and parsley, reserving the sardines. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil to the bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Place the salad on a platter.

Fry the eggs in a hot skillet with a little bit of butter, but leave the yolks runny. Top the salad with the pickled red onions, reserved sardines, fried eggs, and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

**PAIRING:** A verdelho, such as Rafael Palacios Louro Do Bolo, 2007, Galicia, Spain, or a vinho verde.





**skillet sardines with fennel, currant, and pine nut salad**

For the sardines:

½ pound whole fresh sardines  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
¼ cup fresh mint leaves, cut  
into ribbons (reserve 1 table-  
spoon for the salad)  
Juice of 1 medium lemon  
(about 3 tablespoons)  
Toothpicks, for securing the  
sardines

For the fennel, currant, and pine nut salad:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin  
olive oil, plus additional for  
drizzling  
½ cup thinly sliced shallots  
Pinch of salt  
2 tablespoons toasted pine  
nuts  
½ fennel bulb, shaved thin,  
fronds reserved for garnish  
1 tablespoon currants  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
Freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil  
Crusty artisan bread, for  
serving

*There is a special place in my heart for this recipe. It started with an idea: could I transport an eater to the Mediterranean with just a bite? One bite. I knew I needed a very fresh fish, a fish not normally cooked here in the United States, an underdog fish that deserved its day in the sun. I took the humble sardine and started with a list of ingredients, crossing them off one by one until, hopefully, I distilled—in one bite—a sidewalk café baked in the sun and a Mediterranean breeze that makes you tuck your hair behind your ear and carries with it the faintest hint of the ocean.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the sardines, rinse them under cold running water and, with your fingernail, scrape off any scales. Starting with one sardine, gently bend the head back and remove it. Place the sardine on a cutting board. Use a sharp knife or scissors to cut a slit along the belly line, starting at the top and cutting all the way to the tail (without piercing the back).<sup>56</sup> Rinse the cavity under running water to remove the innards. Place the sardine back on the board, with the open cavity facing you, and carefully cut into it, splitting it open like a book, being careful not to cut through to the other side.

Once you have opened the sardine, carefully—with your fingers—pry the spine and rib bones out, leaving as much flesh on the fish as possible. (Don't worry too much about small bones because the high-heat cooking will make them so tender you won't even notice them.) Cut or pull off the tail, along with any attached bone. With scissors, snip off the dorsal fin on the top of the fish. Repeat with the remaining sardines.

Season the inside of each sardine with salt and pepper and tuck in some mint, squeeze some lemon juice over the fish, fold the sides over, and secure it closed with a toothpick. Set aside.

To prepare the salad, heat a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and, when it is hot, add the shallots and salt and cook until the shallots are lightly caramelized, about 7 minutes. Transfer the shallots to a large bowl, along with the pine nuts, shaved fennel, currants, lemon juice, and reserved mint. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Heat a pan (I love to use a well-seasoned cast-iron pan for this) over high heat. You'll need the pan to be superhot in order to caramelize the sardines in the short time it takes to cook them. Add the vegetable oil, and 30 seconds later, carefully add the stuffed sardines, making sure not to overcrowd the pan. Cook for about 2 minutes on the first side, and carefully flip the fish using a sturdy, thin-edged metal spatula (see Tools of the Trade on page xxiv). Cook for another minute or two on the other side. Transfer to a plate.

To serve, place an equal portion of salad on 4 plates and top each with some sardines. Drizzle about a teaspoon of olive oil over the top of each person's dish. Garnish with the fennel fronds and serve with the crusty bread.

**PAIRING:** An albariño, such as La Cana 2008, Rías Baixas, Spain, or a grüner veltliner.

## emmer pasta con le sarde

For the emmer pasta:

- 1 cup emmer flour<sup>57</sup>
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon water

For the topping:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup panko
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup minced fresh Italian parsley
- Salt

For the sauce:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil,  
plus additional for drizzling  
(optional)  
1 cup small-diced red onion  
1 tablespoon minced garlic  
½ cup small-diced celery  
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
Pinch of salt  
1 (4-ounce) tin sardines  
1 (14-ounce) can tomatoes  
1 teaspoon dried currants  
⅓ cup roughly chopped  
toasted walnuts

*Pasta con le Sarde is a rustic Sicilian dish of pasta with sardine sauce. I've taken this classic dish and added a locally grown ancient Italian form of wheat (emmer, also known as farro) to make the pasta. I used to be one of those people who complained about whole-grain pastas. Dry! Like cardboard! Sucks all the moisture out of my face! I would say. Then one day I realized I was throwing out the proverbial whole-grain baby with the pasta water. I've found that making pastas with half all-purpose flour and half whole-grain flour happily walks the line between health, texture, and flavor. Emmer is enjoying a renaissance right now. I love how nutty and earthy it is—without it being so crunchy as to inspire me to dig out my old Birkenstocks.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the pasta, follow the directions for Homemade Fettuccine (page 15), except for this recipe I prefer a thicker noodle, so stop rolling the dough at the #5 or #6 setting. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it heavily. While the water comes to a boil, make the topping and start the sauce.

To prepare the topping, heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and panko, and, stirring frequently, sauté the panko until it is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and mix thoroughly with the lemon zest, lemon juice, parsley, and salt to taste. Set aside.

To prepare the sauce, wipe out your skillet and heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions, garlic, celery, red pepper flakes, and salt. Sauté until the vegetables start to soften, about 7 minutes. Add the sardines, tomatoes, currants, and walnuts; cook, stirring occasionally, for another 5 minutes.

While the sauce cooks, make the pasta. Add the pasta to the boiling water, stir, and cook for about 3 minutes, or until it is a little bit under al dente. Drain through a colander, reserving ¼ cup pasta water.

Add the cooked pasta and reserved cooking water to the skillet with the sauce, turning the heat down to medium. Toss gently until the pasta has absorbed the sauce and is cooked to the al dente stage, 3 to 4 minutes more.

Serve the pasta in bowls with the lemon-panko topping and a drizzle of olive oil.



**PAIRING:** A Greco di Tufo, such as Feudi di San Gregorio 2007, Italy, or an Orvieto.

## **smoked sardines with piquillo pepper sauce**

For the smoked sardines:

6 fresh sardines, head and tail  
on, butterflied and deboned<sup>59</sup>  
Extra-virgin olive oil, for  
coating the sardines  
Lemon juice, for rubbing on the  
sardines  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
½ cup apple wood or alder  
wood chips

For the vegetables:

1 teaspoon olive oil  
1 bunch escarole or curly frisée,  
cut lengthwise into 4 equal  
portions, core left intact  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 plum tomatoes, halved  
3 cups high-heat vegetable oil  
¼ cup finely ground cornmeal  
1 cup cauliflower florets (small  
ones—no bigger than 1 inch)  
1 egg, beaten, mixed with ⅛  
teaspoon Tabasco  
2 tablespoons capers, drained  
and dried on paper towels

For the piquillo pepper sauce:

2 *piquillo* peppers<sup>58</sup>  
1 teaspoon sherry vinegar  
¼ teaspoon cayenne  
¼ teaspoon smoked paprika  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive  
oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

*I love it when two heads are better than one in the kitchen. I was cooking with my dear friend Jet and mentioned I wanted to try smoking some sardines. Without skipping a beat, she said we should deep-fry cauliflower florets as a textural contrast. I suggested dipping the cauliflower in a*

*cornmeal batter before frying, and she followed with an idea to serve the dish with a smoked tomato and piquillo pepper sauce to bring together all the flavors. There is simply no way I would have put these particular ideas together on my own; collaboration is the engine behind innovative recipes. This dish is like no other—I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.*

SERVES 4

To prepare the sardines, rub the insides of the fish with a little olive oil and lemon juice and then season them inside and out with salt and pepper.

Smoke the sardines according to the directions on page 131, except that for this recipe, you'll flip the sardines after only 3 minutes, smoking them for a total of about 6 minutes. When the sardines are done smoking, carefully transfer them to a plate, cover with aluminum foil, and keep warm.

To prepare the vegetables, rub the olive oil all over the escarole, season to taste with salt and pepper, and smoke for about 4 minutes, or until the leaves lightly brown around the edges. Set aside. Place the plum tomatoes cut side up on the grate to smoke for a total of 5 minutes. Reserve the tomatoes to make the sauce.

Heat the vegetable oil in a medium saucepan (the oil should be 2 inches deep) over medium-high heat until it measures 350°F on a deep-fat thermometer, or a tester grain of cornmeal bubbles immediately to the surface. Season the cornmeal generously with salt and pepper. Set up a plate with the cauliflower, a bowl for the egg, a plate with the cornmeal, and a final plate for the coated cauliflower. With your hands, quickly dip the cauliflower florets into the beaten egg and then coat with the cornmeal. Fry the cauliflower for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the florets are browned and crisp-tender in the middle. Remove with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate. Add the capers and fry just until they “bloom” open (you'll see the sides wing out, and the capers will start to brown). Set aside.

To prepare the sauce, add the *piquillo* peppers, sherry vinegar, cayenne, smoked paprika, olive oil, and reserved smoked tomatoes to the bowl of a food processor. Purée until very smooth and season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, ladle some *piquillo* pepper sauce on each of 4 plates, lay some smoked escarole over the top, and place a smoked sardine on the escarole. Top with fried cauliflower pieces scattered on and around the fish. Garnish with the fried capers.

**PAIRING:** A sparkling rosé, such as Lucien Albrecht Cremant d'Alsace Brut NV, Alsace, France, or a sauvignon blanc.







**squid**



***Squid is one of those galvanizing types of seafood.*** It has its share of lovers and haters, and for the most part, the hater camp is stocked with the poor folks who've had to chew through overcooked squid better served as projectile weapons. The lovers—myself included—have tasted the divinity found in a piece of grilled or wok-seared squid that has been removed from the flame with the urgency and focus one would employ if their own hand was on fire. Like many, I stumbled through several years wondering why these rubbery rings were worthy of menu real estate until a trip to Italy where, at the famous restaurant Guido da Costigliole, a Michelin one-star restaurant in Piedmont, I was served a bowl of squid that changed my perspective forever. I can only guess at its preparation, but it seemed to be poached in butter that had been flavored with fresh bay leaves. It was insanely good. The squid was so surprisingly tender. I heard my teeth meet with too much force, so prepared was my mouth to do battle. I went back to the same restaurant the next night. I ordered the exact same dish.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE**Squid grow quickly and are, generally speaking, caught toward the end of their short life cycle (about six months to a year). Good management of this fishery is crucial because squid are a very important link in the food chain. Like sardines and anchovies, they are food for sea lions, salmon, dolphins, whales, and seabirds. Currently, most of the Pacific Coast squid is coming from California. The California Department of Fish and Game manage this fishery consistent with a federal fishery management plan. The state regulates catch limitations, time and seasonal closures, monitoring programs, and a permit system.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:**California squid (*Loligo opalescens*) are also called market squid, California market squid, Monterey squid, or opalescent inshore squid. Squid is called *ika* in sushi bars, but it is often not squid at all, but rather Vietnamese cuttlefish harvested from unregulated fisheries. This practice can negatively impact other organisms that depend on the cuttlefish as an important food source. Squid is also called calamari in Italian, a name that has become synonymous with “squid” in the English language.

**SEASON:** There are two squid fisheries in California: the summer Monterey Bay fishery and the fall and winter fishery in Southern California. You can pretty much say squid are available year-round. You can also find frozen squid from California year-round, though an estimated 90 percent gets exported (and, ironically, sold back to us as frozen calamari from China).

**BUYING TIPS:** Squid are sold fresh both whole and cleaned (separated into tubes and tentacles), as well as frozen (whole and cleaned).

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET**Where was it caught? Try to buy domestic Pacific Coast squid.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** When I get any squid home that I'm not able to use that night, I take it out of its packaging, pat it dry with paper towels, rewrap it in plastic wrap, put it in a drip pan

(a perforated pan or a colander over a bowl), and throw some ice on top before storing it in the refrigerator. This ensures that the squid is optimally chilled to preserve freshness and is ready to cook the next day. Thaw frozen squid according to How to Safely Thaw Frozen Fish on page xxvii.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Market squid are caught at night by purse seining. Boats shine bright lights to attract massive numbers of squid from their spawning grounds. Small boats then harvest the squid by drawing the net around them and pulling it up.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** I substitute spot prawns or scallops for squid when necessary.





**quick squid with red chile sauce and herbs**



1 pound cleaned squid, tubes  
cut into rings and tentacles  
cut in half lengthwise  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed  
lime juice (about ½ lime)  
2 green onions, minced  
Pinch of salt  
Heaping ¼ teaspoon freshly  
ground pepper  
1 head butter lettuce, washed  
and dried, whole leaves  
picked off the stem  
2 cups fresh cilantro leaves  
1 cup fresh Thai or regular basil  
leaves  
1 carrot, grated or cut into  
fine julienne, or 1 cup bean  
sprouts  
1 cup Thai sweet chile sauce, [60](#)  
such as Mae Ploy brand  
1 tablespoon high-heat  
vegetable oil

*This is the recipe to make for people who are convinced that healthy food can't be made quickly and inexpensively. In no time, the table will be overflowing with fresh herbs, lettuce, and quickly seared salty-sour squid. You can tell your guests to place all the ingredients in a piece of lettuce before dipping into the sweet chile sauce or, alternatively, make themselves a salad and use the sauce as dressing.*

**SERVES 4 FOR LUNCH OR AS AN APPETIZER**

In a large bowl, combine the squid with the fish sauce, lime juice, green onions, salt, and pepper. Set aside while you heat a wok or large sauté pan over high heat. Decoratively assemble the lettuce, cilantro, Thai basil, carrots, and a bowl of chile sauce on a large platter.

Add the vegetable oil to the wok over high heat and, when it is hot, add the squid. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes only, just until the squid ring edges curl up a bit and turn white. Transfer the squid to a bowl, leaving the liquid in the wok. Reduce the liquid down to a thick glaze (making sure to add any juices that accumulate at the bottom of the bowl the squid is resting in), about 5 minutes. Pour the glaze back over the squid and serve it on the platter with the accompaniments.

**PAIRING:** A riesling, such as Navarro Vineyards 2008, Mendocino, California, or a gewürztraminer.

**wok-seared squid with lemongrass, chile, and basil**



1 stalk lemongrass  
2 tablespoons high-heat  
vegetable oil  
1 pound cleaned squid, tubes  
cut into rings and tentacles  
cut in half lengthwise, or  
whole squid,<sup>61</sup> cleaned and  
cut  
½ small red onion, cut into  
thin half moons  
1 tablespoon grated fresh  
ginger  
½ cup medium-diced red bell  
pepper  
1 tablespoon Thai roasted  
red chile paste (I like Thai  
Kitchen's brand)  
¼ cup clam juice  
½ cup roughly torn fresh basil  
leaves  
1 teaspoon fish sauce, plus  
additional for seasoning  
2 medium limes, one juiced,  
the other cut into wedges  
for garnish  
Cooked rice noodles or rice,  
for serving

*Stir-frying is high-heat cooking from start to finish. It is extra important to have all your ingredients ready before you turn on the heat (what the French call mise en place). Be prepared for some active stirring, as the squid is in and out of the hot wok very quickly. By the time the heady scent of the lemongrass has reached your nostrils, the squid is probably done. Feel free to serve the lemongrass pieces in each person's bowl: just be sure to tell your diners not to eat them outright, unless they are really into a high-fiber diet. Add a little kick by including thinly sliced jalapeños when stir-frying the vegetables.*

SERVES 4 FOR LUNCH OR AS A LIGHT DINNER

Prepare the lemongrass by cutting off the top half of the stalk (where it is thinner and darker); discard this. Trim the very bottom and discard, then cut the stalk into 1-inch lengths. Smack each piece of lemongrass with the side of a knife to help it release its flavor into the dish. Heat a wok or large sauté pan over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil to the wok, along with the lemongrass. Cook for 1 minute, or until the lemongrass just starts to brown. Add the squid

and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or just until the squid ring edges curl up a bit and turn white. Transfer the squid and lemongrass, along with any juices, to a large bowl and reserve. Wipe the wok clean with a paper towel.

Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil to the wok (still at high heat), along with the onions, ginger, bell pepper, and chile paste. Pick the reserved lemongrass from its bowl and add to the wok. Sauté, actively stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the onions start to soften. Add any juice that has collected from the squid (but not the squid itself) and the clam juice.

Cook over high heat until there is hardly any liquid left, about 2 minutes. Add the squid, basil, and fish sauce, and cook for 1 more minute. Season to taste with more fish sauce as needed and add the lime juice.

Serve immediately, over rice noodles or rice, with lime wedges on the side.

**PAIRING:** A riesling, such as Chateau Ste. Michelle Eroica 2008, Columbia Valley, Washington, or a Thai beer, such as Singha.



### **squid with chickpeas, potatoes, and piquillo peppers**

1 (15-ounce can) chickpeas,  
drained and rinsed

1½ tablespoons plus ¼ cup  
extra-virgin olive oil, plus  
additional for garnish (a  
really nice, fruity olive oil  
works well here)

½ teaspoon smoked bitter-  
sweet or sweet paprika

Heaping ¼ teaspoon freshly  
ground pepper

Salt

1 small leek

⅓ pound small-diced Yukon

Gold potatoes, skin left on

⅛ teaspoon cayenne

1/3 cup *piquillo*<sup>62</sup> or roasted red  
peppers, sliced into 1/4-inch  
rings  
1/4 cup manzanilla<sup>62</sup> or other  
flavorful, cured olives, pitted  
and roughly chopped  
1/2 teaspoon minced fresh  
thyme  
1 1/2 tablespoons good-quality  
sherry vinegar  
1 pound cleaned squid,  
tubes cut into 1/4-inch rings  
and tentacles cut in half  
lengthwise, or whole squid,<sup>63</sup>  
cleaned and cut  
1 tablespoon roughly chopped  
fresh Italian parsley, for  
garnish

*Squid and potatoes have a fabulous affinity for one another. When potatoes are browned a bit and cooked together, even briefly, with squid, they act as flavor sponges, soaking up any juices and providing a fluffy contrast to the tender toothsomeness of the perfectly cooked squid. When good extra-virgin olive oil and piquillo peppers are added, you are transported right to Spain—standing shoulder to shoulder at a tapas bar drinking wine out of little cups, the sun hitting your shoulders and music playing. I haven't yet been to Spain, but didn't that sound awfully convincing?*

SERVES 4 FOR LUNCH OR AS AN APPETIZER

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

On a baking sheet, toss the chickpeas with 1 1/2 tablespoons of the olive oil, smoked paprika, and pepper. Season to taste with salt. Roast for about 10 minutes, or until the chickpeas are browned. Set aside. Leave the oven on.

Prepare the leek by cutting off the dark green tougher part (you can save it to make stock). Cut off the root end. Cut the leek in half lengthwise and wash well. Slice into 1/2-inch half-moons.

In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, add 1/4 cup of the olive oil and, when it is hot, add the potatoes, a large pinch of salt, and cayenne. Cook the potatoes until they are crisp on the outside and tender on the inside, 6 to 7 minutes. Add the leeks and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until they are soft. Add the peppers, olives, thyme, and sherry vinegar, and sauté for another few minutes. Pull the pan off the heat and immediately add the squid and chickpeas. Mix well and scoop the mixture into 4 small oven-safe dishes, such as Spanish *cazuelas* or medium ramekins. Place the dishes on a baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes, or until the squid is tender and cooked through.

Remove from the oven and garnish with the parsley and a drizzle of good olive oil, about 1 teaspoon per person. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A vinho verde, such as Casal Garcia Branco White 2009, Portugal, or an albariño.







**grilled squid with tamarind and orange**

1 teaspoon minced shallot  
1 tablespoon grated fresh  
ginger  
1 tablespoon minced serrano  
chile (seeds left in)  
1 small orange, first zested,  
then juiced (about 1 teaspoon  
zest and 3 tablespoons juice)  
2 teaspoons tamarind paste or  
lemon juice  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon  
extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pound whole squid, [64](#) cleaned,  
tentacles cut from the tubes  
High-heat vegetable oil, for  
oiling the grill  
1 teaspoon minced fresh mint,  
for garnish  
Maldon or gray sea salt, for  
garnish (optional)

*Primum non nocere. First, do no harm. All medical students are taught this, and I am of the opinion that it should also be taught in culinary schools. In medicine, sometimes the cure can do more damage than the sickness, and similarly, overzealous culinary students and chefs can sometimes do more damage to food than if they had simply let the poor ingredient be. I'm a big fan of sauce, don't get me wrong, but some foods shine the brightest when prepared the most simply. Great ingredients don't require heroic culinary interventions.*

SERVES 4

Combine the shallot, ginger, chile, orange zest, 2 tablespoons of the orange juice, tamarind paste, salt, and 1 teaspoon of the olive oil in a small bowl. Pour over the squid and let it marinate for 30 minutes. Preheat an indoor or outdoor grill to high heat. When the grill is very hot, oil the grates well with the vegetable oil and place the squid tubes and tentacles on the grates (you may need to do this in two batches). Weigh the squid pieces down with a cast-iron skillet (or similar heavy heatproof pan). Grill for 1½ minutes, or until you see grill marks. Flip the squid and weigh it down again with the skillet; grill for another 30 seconds to 1 minute. Transfer the grilled squid to a platter and repeat with the remaining squid pieces.

To serve, lay the grilled squid out on a small platter and drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and orange juice. Garnish with the mint and some sea salt.

**PAIRING:** An albariño, such as Abacela 2009, Umpqua Valley, Oregon, or a grüner veltliner.

**chorizo-and-apple-stuffed squid with sherry pepper sauce**

For the chorizo-and-apple-stuffing:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin

olive oil

3 ounces Spanish chorizo, cut  
into small dice

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup small-diced leeks, white  
and light green parts only

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup small-diced Granny

Smith or other tart green

apple

Pinch of salt

$\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon cayenne

1 teaspoon tangerine zest

(from 1 large tangerine)

2 tablespoons red wine

For the sherry pepper sauce:

1 tablespoon diced shallot

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon fresh thyme

leaves

Salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup *piquillo* peppers<sup>[65](#)</sup>

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon honey

1 teaspoon sherry vinegar

For the squid:

$\frac{1}{2}$  pound cleaned whole squid

tubes<sup>[66](#)</sup>

Toothpicks, for securing squid

2 tablespoons extra-virgin

olive oil

For serving:

Crusty bread

*Recipes are the currency of chefs. My conviction is that when chefs share recipes and ideas with each other, they spread goodwill and foster creativity and collaboration. Thanks to chef Ashlyn Forshner for this fabulous, original, and unforgettable stuffed squid dish, spicy and savory with Spanish chorizo, sweet with apples and leeks, and tart with a sherry-vinegar-laced pepper sauce.*

SERVES 6 AS AN APPETIZER



To prepare the stuffing, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a large skillet. Add the chorizo and cook for 5 minutes, or until crispy and brown around the edges. Add the leeks, apples, salt, cayenne, and tangerine zest and sauté for 3 to 4 more minutes, or until the apples soften. Turn the heat up to high and deglaze the pan with the red wine until all the liquid evaporates, about 2 minutes. Let the mixture cool for 5 minutes.

To prepare the sauce, add all of the ingredients to the bowl of a food processor and blend thoroughly, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides. Check seasoning and set aside.

To prepare the squid, using a small spoon, stuff a squid tube with a portion of chorizo-apple filling, packing it in tightly. Secure the squid closed with a toothpick. Repeat with the remaining squid.

In a large skillet over medium heat, add the olive oil. When the oil is hot, caramelize the stuffed squid, cooking for 1 to 2 minutes, then flipping and cooking for another minute or two on the other side, being careful not to overcook. Set aside.

Serve each guest a small plate with one stuffed squid and a spoonful of pepper sauce on the side. Pass around some good crusty bread to dip in the sauce.

**PAIRING:** A Vouvray sec, such as La Craie 2008, Loire Valley, France, or an Alsatian pinot gris.







**sustainable caviar**

***I can't remember the occasion.*** The “occasion” seems less important than the way I chose to celebrate it. It was me. A spoon. A glass of champagne. A tiny jar of caviar. But let's get serious—unless you're fabulously wealthy, you and caviar are probably two ships passing in the night. I once had the chance to try Osetra caviar from the Caspian Sea and it was remarkable. (I got a tip from a friend that there was a place you could pay a small fee for samples.) Years later I started learning more and more about seafood sustainability issues, and the thought of eating a generation of wild sturgeon in one bite (and knowing that sturgeon was killed for those eggs) took away my enjoyment. I missed that little celebratory pop when your tongue presses down on an egg against your teeth. I missed the flavor and the occasion of sharing caviar (or eating it all by yourself). Years later at The Herbfarm, I learned all about sustainably harvested caviar. I tried paddlefish caviar from Montana and farmed white sturgeon caviar from California. On my own, I experimented with *ikura* (chum salmon eggs from Alaska) and trout eggs, and a whole new world of egg popping opened up to me. Connoisseurs argue that the flavor is not the same as the “real” thing (Caspian Sea sturgeon), and that even the word “caviar” is reserved only for the eggs of the sturgeon. I argue that whether you call it caviar or roe or eggs, there is plenty to be excited about flavorwise with sustainable “caviar” and, as an added bonus, my environmental indigestion is now a thing of the past.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A GOOD CHOICE:** Salmon roe comes from wild Alaska chum salmon (see page 98 for an explanation of Alaska salmon's sustainability). Trout, white sturgeon, and paddlefish roe all come from farmed species, so natural resources are not depleted to harvest the eggs. At the time of this writing, there are many sustainably farmed caviar options, but as I've advised throughout this book, make sure to ask questions and purchase farmed caviar from places committed to supporting these issues.

**BY ANY OTHER NAME:** Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) roe is known as *ikura* in sushi bars or to old salts as “bait.” Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) roe is similar in color to salmon roe, but it has a smaller bead size. White sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) roe is farmed in California. Paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) is a relative of white sturgeon.

**SEASON:** Year-round for the types of caviar I mention in this book.

**BUYING TIPS:** Look for eggs that are shiny, firm, and separate. They should have a fresh, light, briny smell.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU PULL OUT YOUR WALLET:** The most important way to ensure that you are buying a sustainable product is to purchase domestic fish eggs. The only wild caviar recommended for the Pacific Coast is salmon caviar (*ikura*). The others are all farmed: make sure to ask where they are from.

**CARING FOR YOUR GOOD FISH:** The most important thing you can do to preserve the quality of your caviar is to keep it very cold. I like to store it on an ice pack in a small cooler in the fridge.

Unopened in your refrigerator, tinned caviar will last for 2 weeks, and vacuum-sealed jars will last for 5 to 6 weeks. Once the tins or jars are opened, they should be used up within 2 to 3 days. *Ikura* and trout roe can be frozen for later use. Paddlefish and white sturgeon roe should not be frozen because their delicate texture will be compromised.

**HOW THIS TYPE OF SEAFOOD IS RAISED OR HARVESTED:** Wild salmon caviar is harvested from chum salmon returning in the fall. White sturgeon, trout, and paddlefish roe are farmed in clean, artesian well water.

**SUSTAINABLE SUBSTITUTES:** Paddlefish is a good substitute for white sturgeon and vice-versa.





**four-star duck eggs**



1 tablespoon butter  
¼ cup cream  
6 duck eggs, [67](#) beaten  
Truffle salt [68](#)  
Freshly ground pepper  
1 ounce paddlefish caviar [69](#)  
Fresh thyme leaves, for garnish  
(optional)

*This dish is so close to going whole hog that I might as well wrap it in gold leaf. I think I've used every luxury product there is in this recipe. The most significant aspect to get right is cooking the eggs perfectly, so read these instructions carefully. It's an art, and it may take some discipline and perseverance to undo the way you've probably been making scrambled eggs your whole life. I can't wait for you to experience these soft, tiny, pillowy curds of golden goodness set off—just so—by the microscopic popping action of caviar beads between your teeth.*

SERVES 4 AS AN UNFORGETTABLE BRUNCH

Heat a large pan (pick one that doesn't have a bad reputation as a "sticker") over medium-high heat. Add the butter. Let it bubble, then turn the heat down to medium low. In a medium bowl, whisk the cream into the eggs, and pour the mixture into the pan. Season with truffle salt and pepper. Grab a wooden spoon and start stirring. You will be tempted to turn the heat up, but don't. If you keep stirring the eggs at a medium-low temperature they will produce the creamiest, most delicious curds you've ever had. It should take about 10 minutes before they start to set into small curds, but they will still have lots of moisture. Look for creamy, barely set eggs. Take the pan off the heat. Spoon the eggs into 4 bowls, dollop each with a bit of caviar, and garnish with the thyme.

**PAIRING:** A Chablis, such as Albert Bichot Domaine Long-Depaquit 2007, or a Sancerre from the Loire Valley in France.

### **paddlefish caviar hash**

1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¾ pound russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into medium dice (about 2 cups)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 cups arugula  
4 eggs  
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
Sour cream, for serving

1 ounce paddlefish caviar  
4 pieces good crusty bread,  
toasted

*This is the dish chefs eat when the work night is over and they're hungry and tired and want something satisfying and quick (except for the caviar part, because the customers got that). You will be tempted to start throwing all sorts of things in with the potatoes, but try to resist. The idea behind spending your hard-earned cash on caviar is to be able to taste it. If you decide to make this without the caviar, though, by all means fry up tons of onions and please pass the Tabasco.*

SERVES 4

Heat a cast-iron or other skillet over medium-high heat. Add the butter, olive oil (or, if you are lucky enough to have it, substitute with duck fat), and potatoes. Once the potatoes start browning on the bottom, 7 to 8 minutes, flip them over with a thin-edged metal spatula (a fish spatula works well), carefully scraping along the bottom of the pan to release them without damaging that great crust. Keep cooking until the potatoes are tender, about 5 minutes. Season really well with salt and pepper. Add the arugula, off the heat, and let it wilt among the potatoes. Set aside.

To poach the eggs, fill a medium bowl with ice water and set aside. Crack each egg into an individual small cup. In a large sauté pan over high heat, bring 3 inches of water to a boil. Add a large pinch of salt and the white wine vinegar. Gently place each egg into the simmering water. Reduce the heat to medium low. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the whites are set but the yolks are still soft. With a slotted spoon, transfer the eggs to the ice water and place in the refrigerator until ready to serve. (To reheat, place the eggs back into barely simmering water for 30 seconds.)

Season the poached eggs with salt and pepper. Serve each guest a scoop of potatoes and arugula, then top with a poached egg, a dollop of sour cream, a spoonful of caviar, and a piece of toast.

**PAIRING:** A Chablis, such as Joseph Drouhin 2007, or a light sparkling wine.

### **potato and beet latkes with horseradish sour cream and caviar**

¼ cup grated peeled red beets  
¼ cup grated peeled carrots  
¾ pound russet or Yukon Gold  
potatoes, grated using the  
largest holes of a box grater  
(about 2½ cups)  
2 tablespoons grated onion  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 egg  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
Freshly ground pepper  
High-heat vegetable oil, for  
pan-frying

½ cup sour cream  
1 teaspoon prepared  
horseradish  
4 ounces smoked trout, black  
cod, char, or salmon  
1 ounce trout caviar or *ikura*  
(salmon eggs)  
¼ cup parsley leaves or dill  
sprigs, for garnish

*I grew up in a pseudo-Jewish family, meaning we celebrated some of the holidays (the ones with the least amount of long-winded reading and fasting), and I was forced to go to temple until I was thirteen. My Jewish upbringing was less about religion and more about culture. Where there's culture, there's food, and frankly, in my family, it was always about the food. Latkes are a traditional dish served during Hanukkah. I came up with this dish by basically taking every food that appeared on our holiday table and putting it into one dish: grated beets reminded me of borscht, smoked fish reminded me of New York Jewish delis, horseradish reminded me of maror that we put on matzoh during Passover, and caviar reminded me of that time I caught my grandmother stealing a little bit from a small jar when she thought I wasn't watching her.*

SERVES 4 TO 6 AS AN APPETIZER

Combine the beets, carrots, potatoes, and onion in a bowl. Stir in the salt and let the vegetables sit for 10 minutes (the salt will help bring out a lot of the moisture). Over the sink, squeeze the vegetables with your hands to remove the liquid. Add the egg and flour and season with the pepper. Form a small amount into a tester latke (about 1 inch wide and flattened with your fingers so it is thin). Place some paper towels on a sheet pan.

Heat a medium cast-iron (or reliably nonstick) pan over medium-high heat. Add a tiny amount of oil and fry the tester latke until it is golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer to the sheet pan and when the latke is cool, taste it for seasoning. Season the whole mixture if necessary with more salt and pepper. Form the rest of the latkes and fry them in batches in about ¼ cup oil, adding more as needed.

In a small bowl, mix the sour cream with the horseradish and set aside.

Top each latke with a small amount of smoked trout, a small dollop of horseradish cream, some caviar, and parsley leaves. Serve immediately.

**PAIRING:** A champagne, such as NV Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve, or a muscadet.







**caviar on buttered brioche with crème fraîche and chives**

½ cup warm water (110°F to 120°F)  
1 package active dry yeast  
3 tablespoons sugar  
6 extra-large eggs, at room temperature  
4¼ cups unbleached flour, plus more as needed  
2½ teaspoons kosher salt  
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1 egg, beaten well with 1 tablespoon milk, for egg wash  
½ cup crème fraîche, whisked to thicken  
1 ounce paddlefish or white sturgeon caviar  
1 tablespoon snipped chives, for garnish

*You certainly don't have to make your own brioche for this recipe; you could just purchase some and proceed directly to using it as a caviar-distribution vehicle. But, truly, it's very easy to make and doesn't require any special skill (shhh, don't tell French bakers I just said that). With that much butter and egg, it's a pretty forgiving recipe. If you happen to live near a farmers market or know someone raising chickens, the bright orange of farm-grown eggs makes an especially golden brioche.*

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS APPETIZER

Preheat the bowl of a stand mixer by rinsing it with hot water. Combine the warm water, yeast, and sugar in the bowl. Mix with a wooden spoon and let rest for 5 minutes, or until the yeast and sugar dissolve (the yeast should show signs of activity after 5 minutes by bubbling up—if not, start over with fresher yeast). Add the eggs and, using the paddle attachment, beat on medium speed for 1 minute, or until well mixed. With the mixer on low speed, add 2 cups of the flour and the salt and mix for 5 minutes. With the mixer still on low, add 2¼ more cups of flour and mix for 5 more minutes. Scrape the dough into a large buttered bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight. The next day, allow the dough to sit at room temperature for 1 hour. Meanwhile, grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. Place the dough in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, add the softened butter in chunks, and mix for 2 minutes, adding additional flour as needed to make a ball. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured cutting board, place it in the buttered loaf pan. Cover with a damp towel and set aside to rise at room temperature until doubled in volume, about 2 hours. Preheat the oven to 350°F.



When the dough has risen, brush the top with the egg wash and bake for 30 minutes, or until the top springs back and it sounds slightly hollow when tapped. Turn the loaf out onto a wire rack to cool. When cool, cut 4 thin ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or less) slices, remove the crusts, spread with butter, and cut each square into quarters. Preheat the broiler. Place the brioche squares on a sheet pan and, watching carefully, broil on the middle rack until they crisp and brown lightly, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove, cool, and top each brioche square with some crème fraîche and caviar. Garnish with a sprinkle of chives.

**PAIRING:** A *blanc de blanc* champagne, such as Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc 2006, North Coast California, or a light sparkling wine.

### **celery root tart with caramelized leeks and caviar**

For the tart dough:  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 cup (2 sticks) cold unsalted  
butter, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
6 to 8 tablespoons ice water  
1 egg, beaten well with 1  
tablespoon water, for  
egg wash

For the tart filling:  
1 pound celery root (aka  
celeriac), cut into medium  
dice  
2 medium shallots, thinly  
sliced  
2 teaspoons minced fresh  
rosemary  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin  
olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground  
pepper  
1 egg, beaten  
Cream, as needed for  
puréeing  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 medium leek, sliced into  
thin rounds, white and light  
green parts only (about 2  
cups)

For garnish:

¼ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano  
curls, made with a peeler  
1 ounce paddlefish or white  
sturgeon caviar

*Learning how to make perfect pastry requires practice, but once the skills are attained, oh my goodness—you'll have the pleasure of watching your guests' eyes light up as flakes of pastry cascade from their smiling lips. I prefer all-butter doughs for their flavor, and I love how sweet and nutty celery root gets after it is roasted. I think, as of this writing, I've probably made and eaten at least a million of these tarts. Pull out the caviar for special occasions.*

MAKES 4 SMALL OR 2 LARGE TARTS

To prepare the dough, add the flour, butter, and salt to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse about 20 times, then check the consistency of the dough. The butter should be in pieces the size of small peas or large grains of rice. Keep pulsing as needed until the dough has reached that consistency, then transfer it to a large bowl.

Add 6 tablespoons of ice cold water to the bowl and with the fingers of one hand in a “claw” shape, mix the dough. Squeeze the dough in your hands: if it holds together, it's ready. If it's dry and does not hold together, add a tiny bit more water. Mix again with your hand. (You do not want to add too much water.)

When the dough is ready (it should be a bit crumbly), place it on some plastic wrap. Pull up the sides of the wrap, using it to help form the pastry into a disc. Cut the disc into quarters (or in half, for the larger tarts). Put each piece in plastic wrap and form into rough discs. Chill in the refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Dust the counter and the dough with flour, and with a rolling pin, roll out each disc to ⅛-inch thickness. Using an 8-inch plate as a guide, cut the dough into circles. Crimp or fold in the edges of the tart shells, poke the bottoms all over with the tines of a fork, and place them on a sheet pan. Brush the edges with the egg wash. Chill for 15 minutes in the refrigerator.

Place the tart shells on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until nicely browned. You may want to rotate the pans top to bottom, front to back, midway through cooking. Lift the tart shells carefully and make sure the bottoms are lightly browned. Let cool.

Increase the oven temperature to 400°F.

To prepare the filling, in a medium bowl, combine the celery root, shallots, rosemary, and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet, and roast for 20 minutes, or until the celery root is soft.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

Transfer the mixture to the bowl of a food processor, add the egg, and purée, adding just enough cream (if needed) to facilitate the mixing process. Pulse for at least 3 minutes, or until the purée is very smooth.

To assemble the tarts, spread the filling onto the tart shells and bake in the oven for 5 minutes, or until



the filling sets up. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a medium sauté pan over medium heat and add the leeks. Sauté until they are tender but not browned, about 8 minutes. When the celery root topping is nicely set, top the tarts with the leeks, then slice each one into 8 pieces and garnish with a Parmesan curl and a small scoop of caviar.<sup>[70](#)</sup>

**PAIRING:** A muscadet *sur lie*, such as Domaine de la Moutonniere, Sèvre et Maine 2008, Loire Valley, France, or a Chablis.



## appendix a: a note on eating raw seafood

I'd like to clear up a few misconceptions. Some people are scared to eat sushi, or more accurately, raw fish. They are afraid it will make them sick. I can understand—I felt the same way when my oldest brother and sister-in-law first tried to tempt me with ruby-red slabs of tuna and meltingly tender bites of yellowtail. “I don’t want to get sick,” I protested, and they just shook their heads and said, “More for us!”

I’m not a microbiologist, but I would reckon that a warmish bowl of cooked rice left out for hours is more likely to make you sick than chilled raw fish in the cold case or a scallop crudo. One thing people don’t realize is that the majority of fish you are served in the raw (with some exceptions) has been frozen before it gets to your plate. This is a good thing—not a sign of inferior quality. You want your fish to have been frozen if you eat it raw because deep-freezing kills parasites. This is especially important with salmon, which is prone to parasites. Please, for your own health and the health of your family, do not eat raw fresh salmon at home. And before you get the notion that you can just throw your salmon fillet in a home freezer for a few days before you eat it raw (or cure it), know this: a home freezer isn’t kept cold enough to kill those parasites. If you are going to cure or prepare salmon sushi, buy high-quality fish that you know has been commercially frozen.

The following is taken directly from the Food and Drug Administration’s web-site: “Freezing and storing at–4°F (–20°C) or below for 7 days (total time), or freezing at–31°F (–35°C) or below until solid and storing at–31°F (–35°C) or below for 15 hours, or freezing at–31°F (–35°C) or below until solid and storing at–4°F (–20°C) or below for 24 hours is sufficient to kill parasites. FDA’s Food Code recommends these freezing conditions to retailers who provide fish intended for raw consumption.” Another misconception? There is no legal definition of “sushi-grade.” It is and always has been a marketing term.

While we are on the topic of misconceptions, “cooking” raw fish in acid, as when you make sevice, does not eliminate parasitic contamination. It alters the protein, firming it up and changing the color of the fish, but it does not make it safe to eat. I use commercially frozen and then thawed fish when I make sevice.

The truth is that cooking food is always the safest way to go. This applies to all foods, not just fish. These days, if you are still buying bagged commercial lettuce, you may want to cook that too. I jest, but not entirely. If you are immune compromised, pregnant, or very young, it’s important to reduce your risks. Cooking food is a great way to do that. But for the rest of us, eating your fish raw shouldn’t scare you—just take appropriate precautions.

It is actually illegal to serve raw fish in the United States unless it has first been frozen. The only exceptions to this rule are shellfish and tuna (as a deep-sea fish, tuna is exceptionally clean and free of parasites). Sushi bars don’t advertise this fact because we Americans are pretty hung up on the idea that fresh fish is always superior. My thought is, unless you want to be sick, you’ll reconsider this bias. Once you find out your fish has been in the deep freeze, eat it raw to your heart’s content, keeping in mind that you still need to keep it cold and safe from cross-contamination, since you are not cooking it. Deliciousness awaits. Much to my brother’s chagrin, he no longer gets the lion’s share of the sushi.

## **appendix b: fish with the highest levels of mercury and pops**

I think it is important to alert you to the types of seafood—wherever they may be caught—that are highest in mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

First, a brief primer on why mercury and POPs should be avoided.

### **MERCURY**

Mercury can damage developing brains and nervous systems; it is therefore extremely important to monitor the mercury exposure of young children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women of child-bearing age. Mercury is stored in our bodies and can cause health problems, so even women who are not thinking of becoming pregnant and men should limit their mercury consumption.

Seafood with the highest mercury levels that should be avoided: shark, swordfish, tilefish (golden bass or golden snapper), king mackerel, grouper, marlin, and orange roughy.

Seafood with high levels of mercury that should be limited: saltwater bass, croaker, halibut, sea trout, bluefish, American/Maine lobster, and all kinds of tuna, but especially the larger tunas, such as bluefin, yellowtail, and older albacore. Albacore does have higher mercury levels than the other types of fish I recommend in this book; however, keep in mind that the younger the fish, the less mercury is stored in their bodies. Pacific Coast albacore are caught young, and their mercury levels are lower than those of older tuna caught in other areas.

### **POPS**

Persistent organic pollutants are so named because, to oversimplify, the damn things just won't go away. One type of POP is PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls (another is DDT), which are hormone disrupting neurotoxins that have been banned in the United States since 1977. PCBs are found in high levels in fish that come from polluted waters; they are especially concentrated in the skin and fat of the fish. State health advisories alert residents to avoid or limit eating certain fish from polluted waters.

Seafood with high levels of POPs that should be avoided: farmed salmon (whose feed may contain species with concentrated amounts of toxins) and species from unregulated countries where environmental laws are much more lax.







# sustainable seafood resources

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Alaska Department of Fish and Game: [www.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.adfg.state.ak.us)  
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute: [www.alaskaseafood.org](http://www.alaskaseafood.org)  
Chefs Collaborative's Seafood Solutions: <http://chefscollaborative.org/programs/chef-the-sea>  
Environmental Defense Fund's Seafood Selector: [www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1521](http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1521)  
International Pacific Halibut Commission: [www.iphc.washington.edu](http://www.iphc.washington.edu)  
Marine Stewardship Council: [www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)  
Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch: [www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx)  
Pacific Fishery Management Council: [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)  
Salmon Safe: [www.salmonsafe.org](http://www.salmonsafe.org)  
Save Our Wild Salmon (SOS): [www.wildsalmon.org](http://www.wildsalmon.org)  
Seafood Choices Alliance: [www.seafoodchoices.com](http://www.seafoodchoices.com)  
Seasonal Cornucopia: [www.seasonalcornucopia.com](http://www.seasonalcornucopia.com)  
Seattle Aquarium: [www.seattleaquarium.org](http://www.seattleaquarium.org)  
Sustainable Sushi: [www.sustainablesushi.net](http://www.sustainablesushi.net)

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood* by Taras Grescoe (Bloomsbury USA, 2008)  
*Fish Forever: The Definitive Guide to Understanding, Selecting, and Preparing Healthy Delicious, and Environmentally Sustainable Seafood* by Paul Johnson (Wiley, 2007)  
*Fish Without a Doubt: The Cook's Essential Companion* by Rick Moonen and Roy Finamore (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008)  
*Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food* by Paul Greenberg (Penguin Press, 2010)  
*Sustainable Sushi: A Guide to Saving the Oceans One Bite at a Time* by Casson Trenor (North Atlantic Books, 2009)

## RECOMMENDED FILMS

*Red Gold* (documentary directed by Ben Knight and Travis Rummel, 2008)  
*End of the Line* (documentary directed by Rupert Murray, 2009)

# index

Page numbers in *italic* refer to photographs.

## A

*Acipenser transmontanus*. See white sturgeon caviar

aioli

Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli

Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli

albacore tuna

Albacore Niçoise

Albacore Parcels with Mint-Pistachio Pesto

buying tips

caring for

eating raw

filleting knives

Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

mercury levels

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with CaperBlood Orange Sauce

questions to ask when buying

Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

albumin

alcohol, cooking with

Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream

Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon

Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw

Mussels with Guinness Cream

Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth

Newspaper Crab with Soy Caramel Sauce

Roasted Salmon with Morels and Pinot Noir Sauce

sake, about

Sake-Steamed Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame

Steamers with Beer

Tataki's "Faux-Nagi"

tequila, recommendations for

vermouth, use as cooking wine

almonds

Black Cod with Toasted Almond Milk, Delicata Squash, and Frizzled Leeks

Halibut Escabèche with Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde

Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter

alpine char. *See* arctic char

American oysters. *See* Eastern oysters

Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde, Halibut Escabèche with

*Anoplopoma fimbria*. *See* black cod

Apple Cider and Thyme Glaze, Mussels with

apples

Char with Roasted Cauliflower and Apple-Vanilla Vinaigrette

Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce

Dungeness Crab with Bacon-Cider Sauce

Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple Stuffing

arctic char

buying tips

caring for

Char Katsu with Ponzu Sauce and Cucumber-Hijiki Salad

Char with Grilled Romaine, Grapes, and Balsamic Vinegar

Char with Roasted Cauliflower and Apple-Vanilla Vinaigrette

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

Pan-Fried Char with Crispy Mustard Crust

Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar

questions to ask when buying

removing skin from fillets, how-to video for

Smoked Char with Huckleberry and Purslane Salad

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

wok-smoking, how-to video for

Artichoke Soup, Oyster and

Artichokes, Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and

arugula

Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways

Hangtown Fry

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper-Blood Orange Sauce

Paddlefish Caviar Hash



Smoked Char with Huckleberry and Purslane Salad  
Avocado Herb Sauce, Newspaper Crab with

## B

bacon  
Cast-Iron Rainbow Trout  
Dungeness Crab with Bacon-Cider Sauce  
Hangtown Fry  
Jet's Oyster Succotash  
Mussels with Bacon and Israeli Couscous  
Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth  
Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes  
Tomato-Bacon Clams with Croutons  
"Baltic" mussels  
Banana Leaf Salmon, Hajime's Steamed  
banana leaves, about  
basil  
Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab  
Dungeness Crab Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette  
Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs  
Tamarind and Ginger Clams  
Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil  
Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs  
bay shrimp. *See* pink shrimp  
beans  
Albacore Niçoise  
Dilly Beans  
edamame  
Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries  
Jet's Oyster Succotash  
Pan-Fried Trout with Dilly Beans  
Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers  
White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs  
beer  
Mussels with Guinness Cream  
Steamers with Beer  
Beet and Potato Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar  
Belons. *See* European flats  
Beurre Blanc, Tarragon, Scallops with  
*bin'naga maguro*. *See* albacore tuna

black cod  
Black Cod with Toasted Almond Milk, Delicata Squash, and Frizzled Leeks  
buying tips  
caring for  
harvesting or raising methods  
harvesting season  
Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette  
Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar  
questions to ask when buying  
Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce  
Sake-Steamd Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame  
species and common names of  
sustainability of fishing practices  
sustainable substitutes  
Tataki's "Faux-Nagi"  
blueback salmon. *See* sockeye salmon  
bluefin tuna  
Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce, Roasted Black Cod with  
bonito flakes  
books, on sustainable seafood  
bread crumbs. *See* panko  
breads and doughs  
Caviar on Buttered Brioche with Crème Fraîche and Chives  
Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar  
Dandelion Crackers  
Dungeness Crab Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette  
Homemade Fettuccine  
Nettle Gnocchi  
Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple Stuffing  
Summer Scallops with Corn Soup  
Tomato-Bacon Clams with Croutons  
brushes, scrub  
Butter, Nettle-Almond, with Stuffed Trout  
butter clams  
Buttered Brioche with Crème Fraîche and Chives, Caviar on  
buying seafood. *See* sustainable seafood basics  
bycatch

## C

cabbage

Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw

Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli

Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce

calamari. *See* squid

California market squid. *See* California squid

California mussels

California squid

*Cancer magister*. *See* Dungeness crab

capers

Halibut Escabèche with Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde

Mussels with Apple Cider and Thyme Glaze

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper–Blood Orange Sauce

Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce

Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

caramel sauce, soy. *See* soy caramel sauce

Caramelized Figs, Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and

Caramelized Leeks and Caviar, Celery Root Tart with

Caramelized Onions, with Dad ’s Sardines on Crackers

caramelized scallops, tips for searing

Carrot Cream and Marjoram, Scallops with

Carrot Vinaigrette and Shiso-Cucumber Salad, Jerry’s Black Cod with

Cast-Iron Rainbow Trout

cast-iron skillets

cauliflower

Char with Roasted Cauliflower and Apple-Vanilla Vinaigrette

Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce

caviar, sustainable

buying tips

caring for

Caviar on Buttered Brioche with Crème Fraîche and Chives

Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar

Four-Star Duck Eggs

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

making quenelles with, how-to video for

Paddlefish Caviar Hash

Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar

questions to ask when buying

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar

char. *See* arctic char

cheese

Dungeness Crab Mac-and-Cheese

Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth

Scallops, Grits, and Greens

White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs

chili peppers

chile oil

chipotle powder

Cucumber-Hijiki Salad

Grilled Spot Prawns with “Crack Salad”

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

ground chile powder

Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime

Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw

Jerry’s Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette

Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli

Oregon Pink Shrimp Salad with Mint

Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple Stuffing

Oysters on the Half Shell with Cucumber Sorbet

piment d ’Espelette

Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs

Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce

Scallops, Grits, and Greens

Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli

*sriracha*

Tamarind and Ginger Clams

Thail sweet chile sauce

Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs

*See also piquillo* peppers

Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab

chinook salmon

chipotle powder

Chive Sour Cream, Quinoa Cakes with Smoked Trout and

Chives and Crème Fraîche, with Caviar on Buttered Brioche

Chorizo, Oyster, and Apple Stuffing

Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce

Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes, Wild Salmon

chum salmon



- caviar
- Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon
- harvesting season
- species, attributes of
- sustainable substitutes
- Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes

- clam juice
- clams
  - buying tips
  - caring for
  - cleaning, scrub brush for
- Geoduck Crudo with Shiso Oil
- harvesting or raising methods
- harvesting season
- Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram
- questions to ask when buying
- species and common names of
- Steamers with Beer
- sustainability of fishing practices
- sustainable substitutes
- Tamarind and Ginger Clams
- Tomato-Bacon Clams with Croutons

- cleaning, tools for *See also* how-to videos
- closed-containment land-based fish farming
- cocktail shrimp. *See* pink shrimp
- coconut milk
  - Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab
  - Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime
  - Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries
  - Tamarind and Ginger Clams

- cod. *See* black cod
- coho salmon
  - Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon
  - harvesting season
  - Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries
  - species, attributes of
  - sustainable substitutes
  - Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes
- cooking oil, for high-heat use
- cooking tools
- cooking wine. *See* dry white vermouth

- coonstripe shrimp
- Copper River salmon
- Corn Soup, Summer Scallops with
- Couscous, Israeli, with Bacon and Mussels
- crabbing, tips for
- crabmeat. *See* Dungeness crab
- “Crack Salad,” Grilled Spot Prawns with
- Crackers, Dandelion
- Crackers with Caramelized Onions, on Dad ’s Sardines
- Crassostrea giga*. *See* Pacific oysters
- Crassostrea sikamea*. *See* Kumamoto oysters (or “Kumos”)
- Crassostrea virginica*. *See* Eastern oysters
- Crème Fraîche and Chives, with Caviar on Buttered Brioche
- Croutons, Tomato-Bacon Clams with
- crudo
  - Geoduck Crudo with Shiso Oil
  - Scallop Crudo
- cucumbers
  - Char Katsu with Ponzu Sauce and Cucumber-Hijiki Salad
  - Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab
  - Grilled Spot Prawns with “Crack Salad”
  - Jerry’s Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette
  - Oysters on the Half Shell with Cucumber Sorbet
  - Smoked Trout Mousse with Radish and Cucumber Quick Pickle
- currants
  - Dad’s Sardines on Crackers with Caramelized Onions
  - Emmer Pasta con le Sarde
  - Halibut Escabèche with Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde
  - Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad
  - Curry, Halibut Coconut, with Charred Chiles and Lime
- cuttlefish

## D

- Dad’s Sardines on Crackers with Caramelized Onions
- Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream, Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with
- dandelions, about
- deboning fish, tools for *See also* how-to videos
- definitions of terms and ingredients
- defrosting fish safely
- delicata squash, about

Delicata Squash, Black Cod with Toasted Almond Milk, and Frizzled Leeks

dicing sizes

Dilly Beans, Pan-Fried Trout with

documentary films, on sustainable seafood

“dogs.” *See* chum salmon

Drakes Bay oysters. *See* Pacific oysters

dry white vermouth

Duck Eggs, Four-Star

Dungeness crab

buying tips

caring for

Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab

cleaning and cooking, how-to video for

crabbing, tips for

Dungeness Crab Mac-and-Cheese

Dungeness Crab Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette

Dungeness Crab with Bacon-Cider Sauce

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

Newspaper Crab with Three Sauces

questions to ask when buying

species and common names of

sustainability practices

sustainable substitutes

weight conversion of whole crab to crabmeat

## E

Eastern oysters

edamame

eel, freshwater

eggs

Four-Star Duck Eggs

Hangtown Fry

Paddlefish Caviar Hash

White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs

emmer flour

Emmer Pasta con le Sarde

environmental concerns. *See* seafood safety; sustainable seafood basics

Escabèche, Halibut, with Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde

European flats

## F

Fanny Bay oysters. *See* Pacific oysters

farmed versus wild seafood

“Faux-Nagi,” Tataki’s

fennel

- Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways
- Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli
- Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad

Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram, Homemade

Figs, Caramelized, and Seared Albacore with Ratatouille

filleting fish, how-to video for

filleting knives

films, on sustainable seafood

finfish

fish, farmed versus wild

fish, fresh versus frozen

- eating raw seafood
- freezing fish, proper method for
- selecting quality seafood, how-to video for
- sustainability of
- thawing frozen fish safely

fish, sustainability of. *See* sustainable seafood basics

fish, tools for deboning *See also* how-to videos

fish eggs. *See* caviar, sustainable

“FISH” rules

fish sauce

fish scalers

fish spatulas

fish tweezers

“flaking” versus “just flaking,” in fish cookery

flour, emmer

flour, gluten-free

flowers, edible

- dandelions, about
- Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream
- salmonberry blossoms, about
- Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi

Four-Star Duck Eggs

frozen fish. *See* fish, fresh versus frozen



## G

galangal

geoduck

caring for

cleaning, how-to video for

Geoduck Crudo with Shiso Oil

harvesting or raising methods

species

gill-netting

Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream

ginger

galangal

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime

Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette

Sake-Steamed Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame

Tamarind and Ginger Clams

Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs

gluten-free flour

Gnocchi, Nettle, with Smoked Halibut and Stinging Nettle Sauce

golden trout. *See* rainbow trout

“good FISH” rules

greens

Char with Grilled Romaine, Grapes, and Balsamic Vinegar

Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways

Hangtown Fry

Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper–Blood Orange Sauce

Paddlefish Caviar Hash

Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce

Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes

Sake-Steamed Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame

Scallops, Grits, and Greens

Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce

grilled dishes

Char with Grilled Romaine, Grapes, and Balsamic Vinegar

Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways

Grilled Spot Prawns with “Crack Salad”

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

Grits, Scallops, and Greens  
Guinness Cream, Mussels with  
Gulf oysters. *See* Eastern oysters

## H

Hajime's Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon  
halibut. *See* Pacific halibut  
Hangtown Fry  
harvest tags, on commercial shellfish  
harvesting methods. *See* sustainable seafood basics  
Hash, Paddlefish Caviar  
herbs  
    Herb Oil  
    Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram  
    Mussels with Apple Cider and Thyme Glaze  
    Newspaper Crab with Herb Avocado Sauce  
    Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs  
    Scallops with Carrot Cream and Marjoram  
    Scallops with Tarragon Beurre Blanc  
    Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs  
    Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil  
    Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs  
    *See also* basil; lemongrass; mint; shiso; tarragon  
hijiki, about  
Hijiki and Cucumber Salad  
*Hippoglossus stenolepis*. *See* Pacific halibut  
Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram  
hook and line fishing (trolling)  
Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar, with Potato and Beet Latkes  
“hot-smoking” method  
how to use this book  
how-to videos  
    butterflying sardines  
    cleaning and cooking crabs  
    cleaning and cutting up squid  
    cleaning and debearding mussels  
    cleaning geoducks  
    deboning rainbow trout  
    deboning sardines  
    deboning wild salmon

- deveining shrimp
- filleting fish
- making quenelles with caviar
- overview
- removing adductor muscle from scallops
- removing skin from arctic char fillets
- removing skin from Pacific halibut fillets
- removing skin from wild salmon fillets
- searing scallops
- selecting quality seafood
- shucking oysters
- stuffing trout
- wok-smoking arctic char
- wok-smoking halibut
- huckleberries, about
- Huckleberry and Purslane Salad, with Smoked Char
- humpback salmon (or “humpies”). *See* pink salmon

## I

- ika*
- ikura*
- ingredients and terms, definitions of
- Israeli Couscous, about
- Israeli Couscous, Mussels with Bacon and
- ivory king chinook salmon
- iwana*. *See* arctic char
- iwashi*. *See* sardines

## J

- jalapeños
  - chipotle powder
- Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime
- Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw
- Oysters on the Half Shell with Cucumber Sorbet
- Tamarind and Ginger Clams
- Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)
- Japanese mint. *See* shiso
- Japanese scallops

Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries  
Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette  
Jet's Oyster Succotash

## K

Kaffir lime leaves  
kale  
Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries  
Scallops, Grits, and Greens  
*katsuobushi*. *See* bonito flakes  
keta. *See* chum salmon  
kitchen tools  
knives, filleting  
kombu  
kosher salt  
Kumamoto oysters (or "Kumos")

## L

Latkes, Potato and Beet, with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar  
leeks  
Black Cod with Toasted Almond Milk, Delicata Squash, and Frizzled Leeks  
Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar  
Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce  
Roasted Salmon with Morels and Pinot Noir Sauce  
Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers  
lemon juice *See also* tamarind  
Lemon Panko Sauce, with Newspaper Crab  
lemongrass  
Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime  
Tamarind and Ginger Clams  
Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)  
Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs  
*Leukoma staminea*. *See* littleneck clams  
lime  
Gin-and-Tonic-Cured Albacore with Dandelion Crackers and Lime Cream  
Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime  
Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw  
Kaffir lime leaves



Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)  
Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil, Weeknight  
littlefish and eggs  
littleneck clams  
local fisheries  
*Loligo opalescens*. *See* California squid  
longfin tunny. *See* albacore tuna  
long-line fishing

## M

Mac-and-Cheese, Dungeness Crab  
Manila clams  
manzanilla olives  
marbled chinook salmon  
marjoram  
    Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram  
    Scallops with Carrot Cream and Marjoram  
    Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter  
market squid. *See* California squid  
Mediterranean mussels (or “meds”)  
mercury  
mint  
    Albacore Parcels with Mint-Pistachio Pesto  
    Cucumber-Hijiki Salad  
    Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon  
    Jerry’s Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette  
    Oregon Pink Shrimp Salad with Mint  
    Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad  
    Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter  
    *See also* shiso  
mirin  
Monterey squid. *See* California squid  
Mousse, Smoked Trout, with Radish and Cucumber Quick Pickle  
mushrooms  
    Cast-Iron Rainbow Trout  
    Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon  
    Oyster and Artichoke Soup  
    Roasted Salmon with Morels and Pinot Noir Sauce  
    Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi  
Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

mussels

- buying tips

- caring for

- cleaning, scrub brushes for

- cleaning and debearding, how-to video for

- harvesting or raising methods

- harvesting season

- Mussels with Apple Cider and Thyme Glaze

- Mussels with Bacon and Israeli Couscous

- Mussels with Guinness Cream

- Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth

- Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli

- questions to ask when buying

- species and common names of

- sustainability of fishing practices

- sustainable substitutes

Mustard Crust, Crispy, with Pan-Fried Char

*Mytilus californianus*. *See* California mussels

*Mytilus galloprovincialis*. *See* Mediterranean mussels (or “meds”)

*Mytilus trossulus*. *See* “Baltic” mussels

## N

needle-nose pliers

nettles

- harvesting

- Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi

- Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter

Newspaper Crab with Three Sauces

## O

ocean shrimp. *See* pink shrimp

“Ode to a cast-iron skillet”

offshore open-net fish farming

oil, types for high-heat cooking

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper–Blood Orange Sauce

olives

- Albacore Niçoise

- manzanilla olives, about

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper–Blood Orange Sauce

Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers

Summer Scallops with Corn Soup

Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

Olympia oysters (or “olys”)

*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*. See pink salmon

*Oncorhynchus keta*. See chum salmon

*Oncorhynchus kisutch*. See coho salmon

*Oncorhynchus mykiss*. See rainbow trout

*Oncorhynchus nerka*. See sockeye salmon

*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*. See chinook salmon

Onions, Caramelized, with Dad ’s Sardines on Crackers

opalescent inshore squid. See California squid

orange

Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce

Cucumber-Hijiki Salad

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

Olive-Oil-Poached Albacore Steaks with Caper–Blood Orange Sauce

Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli

Oregon pink shrimp. See pink shrimp

Oregon Pink Shrimp Salad with Mint

*Ostrea conchaphila*. See Olympia oysters (or “olys”)

*Ostrea edulis*. See European flats

*Ostrea lurida*. See Olympia oysters (or “olys”)

oysters

buying tips

caring for

Hangtown Fry

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

Jet’s Oyster Succotash

Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple Stuffing

Oyster and Artichoke Soup

Oysters on the Half Shell with Cucumber Sorbet

questions to ask when buying

scrubbing and shucking, tools for

shucking, how-to video for

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

## P

Pacific Coast seafood, definition of

Pacific halibut

- buying tips

- caring for

- cooking tips

- Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime

- Halibut Escabèche with Anchovy and Almond Salsa Verde

- Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw

- harvesting or raising methods

- harvesting season

- mercury levels

- questions to ask when buying

- removing skin from fillets, how-to video for

- Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes

- Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi

- smoking, how-to video for

- smoking at home, instructions for

- species and common names of

- sustainability of fishing practices

- sustainable substitutes

Pacific oysters

Pacific razor clams

paddlefish caviar

- buying tips

- caring for

- Caviar on Buttered Brioche with Crème Fraîche and Chives

- Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar

- Four-Star Duck Eggs

- harvesting or raising methods

- harvesting season

- Paddlefish Caviar Hash

- species of fish

- sustainability of fishing practices

- sustainable substitutes

Pancetta and Vermouth, Mussels with

Pancetta-Radicchio Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes, with Roasted Halibut

*Pandalopsis dispar*. *See* sidestripe shrimp

*Pandalus hypsinotis*. *See* coonstripe shrimp

*Pandalus jordani*. *See* pink shrimp



*Pandalus platyceros*. *See* spot prawns

Pan-Fried Char with Crispy Mustard Crust

Pan-Fried Trout with Dilly Beans

panko

about

Char Katsu with Ponzu Sauce and Cucumber-Hijiki Salad

Dungeness Crab Mac-and-Cheese

Emmer Pasta con le Sarde

Hangtown Fry

Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth

Newspaper Crab with Lemon Panko Sauce

Pan-Fried Char with Crispy Mustard Crust

*Panopea abrupta*. *See* geoduck

Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette, Dungeness Crab

pasta

Dungeness Crab Mac-and-Cheese

Emmer Pasta con le Sarde

Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram

Israeli Couscous, about

Mussels with Bacon and Israeli Couscous

Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi

Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

*Patinopecten caurinus*. *See* weathervane scallops

*Patinopecten yessoensis*. *See* Japanese scallops

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls)

Penn Cove mussels

peppers. *See* chili peppers; *piquillo* peppers

*perilla*. *See* shiso

persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

Pesto with Albacore Parcels, Mint-Pistachio

pickles

Albacore Niçoise

Pan-Fried Trout with Dilly Beans

Sake-Steamd Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame

Scallops with Carrot Cream and Marjoram

Smoked Char with Huckleberry and Purslane Salad

Smoked Trout Mousse with Radish and Cucumber Quick Pickle

White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs

pilchard. *See* sardines

piment d'Espelette

pink salmon

- Hajime's Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon
  - harvesting season
  - species, attributes of
  - sustainable substitutes
- Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes
- pink shrimp
- Pinot Noir Sauce, Roasted Salmon with Morels and *piquillo* peppers
  - Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce
  - Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce
  - Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers
  - where to buy
- pismo clams
- Pistachio-Mint Pesto, with Albacore Parcels
- pliers, needle-nose
- pollution. *See* seafood safety
- polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
- Polyodon spathula*. *See* paddlefish caviar
- Ponzu Sauce and Cucumber-Hijiki Salad, with Char Katsu
- POPs (persistent organic pollutants)
- pork sausage
  - Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce
  - Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple Stuffing
  - See also* bacon; prosciutto
- portion sizes
- potato starch
- potatoes
  - Albacore Niçoise
  - Paddlefish Caviar Hash
  - Pan-Fried Trout with Dilly Beans
  - Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar
  - Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi
  - Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers
  - Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes
- prawns. *See* shrimp
- prosciutto
  - Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth
  - Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes
  - Scallops with Tarragon Beurre Blanc
- purging clams
- purse seining

purslane, about

Purslane and Huckleberry Salad, with Smoked Char

## Q

Qualicum scallops (or “Qualicums”)

Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs

Quinoa Cakes with Smoked Trout and Chive Sour Cream

## R

Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes, Roasted Halibut with radishes. *See* pickles

rainbow trout

- buying tips

- caring for

- Cast-Iron Rainbow Trout

- Caviar, Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and

- caviar, preserving

- caviar, raising method for

- caviar, species and qualities of

- caviar, sustainability of

- deboning, fish tweezers for

- deboning, how-to video for

- filleting, how-to video for

- harvesting or raising methods

- harvesting season

- Pan-Fried Trout with Dilly Beans

- Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar

- questions to ask when buying

- Quinoa Cakes with Smoked Trout and Chive Sour Cream

- smoked trout, buying

- Smoked Trout Mousse with Radish and Cucumber Quick Pickle

- species and common names of

- Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter

- stuffing, how-to video for

- sustainability of fishing practices

- sustainable substitutes

- “ranching,” of freshwater eels

- Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs, with Seared Albacore

raw seafood, safety of  
razor clams. *See* Pacific razor clams  
recipes, organization by skill level  
“reds.” *See* sockeye salmon  
resources for sustainable seafood  
rice wine, sweet  
rice wine vinegar, seasoned  
Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce  
Roasted Halibut with Radicchio-Pancetta Sauce, Peas, and Artichokes  
Roasted Salmon with Morels and Pinot Noir Sauce  
roe. *See* caviar, sustainable

## S

sablefish. *See* black cod  
safety. *See* seafood safety  
Saffron Aioli, Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and  
sake  
    about  
    Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon  
    Newspaper Crab with Soy Caramel Sauce  
    Sake-Steamed Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame  
    Tataki’s “Faux-Nagi”  
salad shrimp. *See* pink shrimp  
salads  
    Albacore Niçoise  
    Char Katsu with Ponzu Sauce and Cucumber-Hijiki Salad  
    Char with Grilled Romaine, Grapes, and Balsamic Vinegar  
    Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways  
    Grilled Spot Prawns with “Crack Salad”  
    Halibut Tacos with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw  
    Jerry’s Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette  
    Oregon Pink Shrimp Salad with Mint  
    Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs  
    Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad  
    Smoked Char with Huckleberry and Purslane Salad  
    White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs  
salmon. *See* wild salmon  
salmonberry blossoms  
“salmon-trout.” *See* rainbow trout  
Salsa Verde, Almond, and Halibut Escabèche with Anchovy



- salt, types of
- Salvelinus alpinus*. *See* arctic char
- sardines
  - butterflying and deboning, how-to video for
  - buying tips
  - caring for
  - Dad's Sardines on Crackers with Caramelized Onions
  - Emmer Pasta con le Sarde
  - harvesting or raising methods
  - harvesting season
  - questions to ask when buying
  - Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad
  - Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce
  - species and common names of
  - sustainability of fishing practices
  - sustainable substitutes
  - White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs
- Sardinops sagax*. *See* sardines
- Saxidoma giganteus*. *See* butter clams
- scalars, fish
- scallops
  - buying tips
  - caring for
  - harvesting or raising methods
  - harvesting season
  - questions to ask when buying
  - removing the adductor muscle, how-to video for
  - Scallop Crudo
  - Scallops, Grits, and Greens
  - Scallops with Carrot Cream and Marjoram
  - Scallops with Tarragon Beurre Blanc
  - searing perfect caramelized scallops, tips for
  - searing scallops, how-to video for
  - species and common names of
  - Summer Scallops with Corn Soup
  - sustainability of fishing practices
  - sustainable substitutes
- scimitar (filleting) knives
- scrub brushes
- sea salt
- seafood, how-to video on selecting

seafood safety

- eating raw seafood

- how to safely thaw frozen fish

- mercury levels

- persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

- toxins, in butter clams

seafood sustainability. *See* sustainable seafood basics

Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs

searing scallops, how-to video for

searing scallops, tips for

seasonality of seafood

seasoned rice wine vinegar

serrano peppers

- Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

- Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette

- Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy and Soy Caramel Sauce

- Tamarind and Ginger Clams

seviche

shellfish

- cleaning, scrub brush for

- eating raw

- harvesting tags

- sustainability of fishing practices

- See also specific type of shellfish*

Sherry Pepper Sauce, with Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid

*shiro maguro*. *See* albacore tuna

shiso

- about

- Geoduck Crudo with Shiso Oil

- Hajime's Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon

- Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette

shrimp

- buying tips

- caring for

- deveining, how-to video for

- Grilled Spot Prawns with "Crack Salad"

- harvesting or raising methods

- harvesting season

- Oregon Pink Shrimp Salad with Mint

- questions to ask when buying

- Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli

- species and common names of
- sustainability of fishing practices
- sustainable substitutes

- Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

- Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

- sidestripe shrimp

- Siliqua patula*. *See* Pacific razor clams

- silver trout. *See* rainbow trout

- “silvers.” *See* coho salmon

- Skillet Sardines with Fennel, Currant, and Pine Nut Salad

- skillets, cast-iron

- skinning fish. *See* how-to videos

- Smoked Chile Aioli, Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and

- smoked chile powder. *See* piment d’Espelette

- smoked fish

- Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar

- Smoked Char with Huckleberry and Purslane Salad

- Smoked Halibut with Stinging Nettle Sauce and Nettle Gnocchi

- Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce

- smoked trout, buying

- Smoked Trout Mousse with Radish and Cucumber Quick Pickle

- wok-smoking, how-to video for

- wok-smoking at home, instructions for

- sockeye salmon

- Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways

- Hajime’s Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon

- harvesting season

- species, attributes of

- sustainable substitutes

- soups

- Chilled Cucumber-Coconut Soup with Dungeness Crab

- Oyster and Artichoke Soup

- Summer Scallops with Corn Soup

- Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

- Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes

- Soy Caramel Sauce

- Soy Caramel Sauce, and Roasted Black Cod with Bok Choy

- Soy Caramel Sauce, with Newspaper Crab

- spatulas, fish

- spices

- Dungeness Crab Mac-and-Cheese

galangal

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

Halibut Coconut Curry with Charred Chiles and Lime

Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries

Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette

Mussels with Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli

Sake-Steamer Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame

spice grinders

Tamarind and Ginger Clams

Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs

*See also* chili peppers; tamarind

spot prawns

buying tips

caring for

Grilled Spot Prawns with "Crack Salad"

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

questions to ask when buying

Shrimp with Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

spot shrimp. *See* spot prawns

squash

Black Cod with Toasted Almond Milk, Delicata Squash, and Frizzled Leeks

delicata squash, about

Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs

squeeze bottles, for vinaigrettes

squid

buying tips

caring for

Chorizo-and-Apple-Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce

cleaning and cutting up, how-to video for

Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

questions to ask when buying

Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs

species and common names of



Squid with Chickpeas, Potatoes, and Piquillo Peppers

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs

*sriracha*

Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon, Hajime's

Steamed Black Cod with Ginger and Sesame, Sake-

Steamers with Beer

steelhead

stinging nettles. *See* nettles

storing seafood. *See* fish, fresh versus frozen

Stuffed Squid with Sherry Pepper Sauce, Chorizo-and-Apple-

Stuffed Trout with Nettle-Almond Butter

Stuffing, Oyster, Chorizo, and Apple

stuffing trout, how-to video for

sturgeon roe. *See* white sturgeon caviar

Succotash, Jet's Oyster

Summer Scallops with Corn Soup

sushi. *See* seafood safety

sustainable seafood basics

  farmed versus wild fish

  fresh versus frozen fish

  “good FISH” rules

  less is more

  resources

  selecting quality seafood, how-to video for

  three choices to make a difference

*See also specific type of seafood*

sweet chile sauce, Thai

Sweet Potato Fries, Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and

sweet rice wine

Sweet-and-Sour Cabbage and Saffron Aioli, Mussels with

## T

Tacos, Halibut, with Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw

tamarind

  buying, preparing, and cooking with

  Grilled Squid with Tamarind and Orange

  Tamarind and Ginger Clams

Tangerine Powder and Smoked Chile Aioli, Shrimp with

tarragon

Dungeness Crab with Bacon-Cider Sauce

Oyster and Artichoke Soup

Scallops with Tarragon Beurre Blanc

Tart, Celery Root, Caramelized Leeks and Caviar with

Tataki's "Faux-Nagi"

tequila, recommendations for

Tequila-Lime Marinade and Red Cabbage Slaw, Halibut Tacos with

Thai sweet chile sauce

thawing fish safely

*Thunnus alalunga*. *See* albacore tuna

Thyme Glaze, Mussels with Apple Cider and

*Tivela stultorum*. *See* pismo clams

Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

Tomales Bay oysters. *See* Pacific oysters

tomatoes

Albacore Niçoise

Albacore Parcels with Mint-Pistachio Pesto

Dungeness Crab Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette

Emmer Pasta con le Sarde

Homemade Fettuccine with Clams and Marjoram

Seared Albacore with Ratatouille and Caramelized Figs

Smoked Sardines with Piquillo Pepper Sauce

Summer Scallops with Corn Soup

Tom Yum Goong (Spicy Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

Tomato-Bacon Clams with Croutons

Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil

Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes

tombo (or tombo ahi). *See* albacore tuna

tools, kitchen

trawling/dredging

triploid oysters (or "trips")

trolling (hook and line fishing)

trout. *See* rainbow trout

truffle salt

tuna. *See* albacore tuna; bluefin tuna

tweezers, fish

## U

unagi (freshwater eel)

## V

Vanilla-Apple Vinaigrette, and Char with Roasted Cauliflower  
vegetable oil, for high-heat cooking  
*Venerupis philippinarum*. *See* Manila clams  
Vermouth, Mussels with Pancetta and  
vermouth, use as cooking wine  
videos, how-to. *See* how-to videos  
vinaigrette  
Char with Roasted Cauliflower and Apple-Vanilla Vinaigrette  
Dungeness Crab Panzanella with Charred-Tomato Vinaigrette  
Jerry's Black Cod with Shiso-Cucumber Salad and Carrot Vinaigrette  
squeeze bottles for  
Virginicas. *See* Eastern oysters

## W

weathervane scallops  
website, for how-to videos. *See* how-to videos  
websites for sustainable seafood resources  
Weeknight Linguine with Spot Prawns and Basil  
weight conversion of seafood to individual portion sizes  
weight conversion of whole crab to crabmeat  
White Bean and Sardine Salad with Fried Eggs  
white king chinook salmon  
white sturgeon caviar  
caring for  
Caviar on Buttered Brioche with Crème Fraîche and Chives  
Celery Root Tart with Caramelized Leeks and Caviar  
harvesting or raising methods  
harvesting season  
species of fish  
sustainability of fishing practices  
sustainable substitutes  
wild fish, questions to ask when buying  
wild fish, sustainability of fishing practices  
wild salmon  
buying tips  
caring for  
caviar, harvesting method of

Caviar, Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and

caviar, questions to ask when buying

caviar, species and common names of

caviar, sustainability of

cooking tips

deboning, fish tweezers for

deboning, how-to video for

eating raw

filleting knives

Grilled Sockeye Salmon with Fennel Two Ways

Hajime's Steamed Banana Leaf Salmon

harvesting or raising methods

harvesting season

Jerk-Spiced Salmon with Coconut Pot Liquor and Sweet Potato Fries

persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

Potato and Beet Latkes with Horseradish Sour Cream and Caviar

questions to ask when buying

removing skin from fillets, how-to video for

Roasted Salmon with Morels and Pinot Noir Sauce

species and common names of

sustainability of fishing practices

sustainable substitutes

Wild Salmon Chowder with Fire-Roasted Tomatoes

wild steelhead

wine, cooking

wine pairings

wok-cooked dishes

how to wok-smoke fish at home

how-to video, for wok-smoking fish

Quick Squid with Red Chile Sauce and Herbs

Wok-Seared Squid with Lemongrass, Chile, and Herbs



## about the author



When she's not cavorting around the woods picking wild things or combing the beaches for her next meal, **BECKY SELENGUT** works as a private chef and cooking teacher. Selengut graduated from the Seattle Culinary Academy at the top of her class and then cut her teeth working the line at several Seattle-area restaurants. An alumna of the internationally renowned Herbfarm Restaurant, Selengut set out on her own in 2004 to start Cornucopia, her private chef and cooking instruction company, followed quickly by the founding of the seasonal, local foods database [SeasonalCornucopia.com](http://SeasonalCornucopia.com). Once a year, Selengut teaches at the famous Rancho La Puerta cooking school in Baja, Mexico. She also holds year-round classes in Seattle, both privately and for PCC Natural Markets and Dish It Up. Selengut sits on the advisory committee for the Shorewood High School culinary arts program, is a member of Chefs Collaborative, and donates books, classes, and dinners each year to numerous charitable organizations. In between gigs, Selengut carries on a lively, awardwinning presence online as Chef Reinvented ([www.chefreinvented.com](http://www.chefreinvented.com)); she is also a freelance writer for *Edible Seattle* (where she was once asked to go catch crabs and write about it) and *Seattle Homes and Lifestyles* magazines. She is a coauthor of the *Washington Local and Seasonal Cookbook*. Selengut lives in Seattle with her sommelier wife, April Pogue, and their two sweet, senile dogs.

1

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debeard and clean mussels.

2

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debeard and clean mussels.

3

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debeard and clean mussels.

4

Israeli couscous is a much larger grain of pasta (about the size of a salmon egg or BB gun pellet) than regular couscous and can be found at large supermarkets or specialty stores.

5

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debeard and clean mussels.

6

Piment d'Espelette can be found in Spanish or French specialty stores or through online sources.

7

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debeard and clean mussels.

8

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to shuck oysters.

9

Edamame, or young soybeans in the pod, are sold in the frozen foods section of most supermarkets. You can also find shelled edamame, which are easy to thaw and add to recipes. If you have access to fresh fiddlehead ferns, you can use them in place of, or in combination with, the edamame. Salicornia, commonly known as beach asparagus or sea beans, would also be a lovely addition to this recipe, as would fava beans. All will need to be blanched in salted water for a few minutes then shocked in ice water before adding.

10

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to shuck oysters.

11

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to shuck oysters.

12

Look for various ground chile powders in the Mexican section of large supermarkets. You can also grind dried whole peppers in a spice grinder to make your own powder.

13

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to shuck oysters.

14

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean live Dungeness crab.

15

*Sriracha* is a chile-based hot sauce that was first produced in Thailand for use with seafood dishes. *Sriracha* has fairly well dominated the Asian hot sauce market in the United States in recent years. As such, it's easy to find: almost all supermarkets will have it either in the Asian foods aisle or with the other hot sauces.

16

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to devein shrimp.

17

Thai sweet chile sauce is easy to find in the Asian foods aisle of any large supermarket.

[18](#)

Kaffir lime leaves are sold fresh in Asian markets. They freeze well, so buy extra leaves for future use.

[19](#)

Galangal is in the ginger family and has aromas of citrus and pine that add pungency and perfume to dishes. The root looks like a larger, shinier version of gingerroot. It can be found in Asian markets.

[20](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to devein shrimp.

[21](#)

Chipotle powder (ground smoked jalapeños) can be found in specialty markets that have a wide selection of spices or can be ordered online.

[22](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to devein shrimp.

[23](#)

Look for ancho chile powder in the Mexican section of large supermarkets. You can also grind dried ancho chiles in a spice grinder to make your own powder.

[24](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[25](#)

Banana leaves can be found frozen in most Asian supermarkets. If you can't find banana leaves, steam the fish in parchment paper (but you'll lose the wonderful perfume of the banana leaves, so buy them if you can).

[26](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove pin bones from a fillet.

[27](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet and remove pin bones.

[28](#)

Get good-quality tequila so you can sip it while you cook—my favorite is Cazadores Reposado, a great clean flavor for the price.

[29](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[30](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[31](#)

Kaffir lime leaves are sold fresh in Asian markets. They freeze well, so buy extra leaves for future use.

[32](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[33](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[34](#)

Nettles are a noxious weed to many, a spring tonic and elixir to others. You will not find them sold in stores. Some vendors may sell them at farmers markets. The best way to obtain nettles is to find a patch in the woods and harvest them yourself (wear gloves!) in early spring.

[35](#)

When foraging for spring nettles in the wild, keep a watchful eye out for deep pink–red salmonberry blossoms in bloom at the same time.

[36](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to wok-smoke fish.

[37](#)

See the note about nettles on page 129.

[38](#)

Delicata squash is a long winter squash with yellow and orange stripes. The skin is thin enough to be edible when cooked. I leave it on to preserve that pretty color. You can substitute butternut squash if you can't find delicata: just peel the butternut and cut it into four 3-by-2-inch portions.

[39](#)

Freshwater eel (unagi) farming is problematic because the eels are captured from the wild as juveniles, before they have a chance to reproduce; they're then raised and sold from Asian farms. This type of aquaculture is known as "ranching," and is particularly unsustainable. Eel populations have declined by estimates of as much as 95 percent. Furthermore, eel often escape from their "ranches" and transfer diseases to an already threatened wild population. If you need another reason not to eat them, freshwater eel are often contaminated with PCBs.

[40](#)

Bonito flakes and kombu can be found in Asian markets or through online sources.

[41](#)

Potato starch can be found in Asian markets or natural food stores. Cornstarch can be used in its place, though potato starch has slightly better "holding" power when you boil a sauce.

[42](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to fillet a fish.

[43](#)

Look for quality smoked trout in the refrigerated section of your local market, or smoke your own by following the instructions on page 131.

[44](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to fillet a fish.

[45](#)

Gluten-free? Rice flour is a great substitute for the all-purpose flour in this recipe.

[46](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to debone and stuff a trout.

[47](#)

Dandelions are easy to find—the trick is making sure they are clean. If you know where to find a lawn full of dandelions, you should determine before picking them whether they have been sprayed with weed killer or other chemicals, or by animals. Pansies and nasturtiums are pretty easy to grow at home, and many large supermarkets are starting to sell little boxes of edible flowers.

[48](#)



Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[49](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to remove the skin from a fillet.

[50](#)

Hijiki is a brown-black sea vegetable that grows on rocky coastlines around Japan, China, and Korea. It is sold dehydrated in large supermarkets and natural food stores.

[51](#)

Chile oil is found in Asian markets or in the Asian foods aisle of most large supermarkets.

[52](#)

I highly recommend using a squeeze bottle in this recipe. They are easy enough to find in kitchen supply stores and most supermarkets (sometimes sold as condiment containers), and they make you feel very official as you “plate” your sauce.

[53](#)

Purslane is a common weed packed full of omega-3 fatty acids. It’s a refreshing and rather succulent succulent (if I may). If you are a gardener, you may have cursed out purslane and stomped angrily on it millions of times. Isn’t it great when you can eat your weeds instead of being annoyed by them? Purslane is sometimes sold at farmers markets in late summer, but generally you must harvest your own. One person’s weed is another’s salad.

[54](#)

Huckleberries have a flavor that is difficult to describe, but they have an earthy-tart-sweet quality that makes a blueberry seem like a one-note amateur. They come into season in the late summer and early fall in the Pacific Northwest mountains. They are sometimes sold at farmers markets, but the best place to get them is while on a hike.

[55](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to wok-smoke fish.

[56](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to butterfly and debone a sardine.

[57](#)

The Pacific Northwest is lucky to have Bluebird Grain Farms, located in Washington’s Methow Valley. They grow emmer and other grains, and they mill their own flours. You can find their products in Washington and Oregon supermarkets or order them online.

[58](#)

Jarred *piquillo* peppers can be found online, at gourmet markets, or at Spanish markets.

[59](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to butterfly and debone a sardine.

[60](#)

Thai sweet chile sauce is easy to find in the Asian foods aisle of any large supermarket.

[61](#)

If using whole squid, go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean and cut up a squid.

[62](#)

Jarred *piquillo* peppers and manzanilla olives can be found online, in stores specializing in Mediterranean ingredients, or in Spanish markets.

[63](#)

If using whole squid, go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean and cut up a squid.

[64](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean and cut a squid.

[65](#)

Jarred *piquillo* peppers can be found online, at gourmet markets, or at Spanish markets.

[66](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to clean a squid.

[67](#)

If you can't find duck eggs, you can approximate their richness by using 6 chicken eggs plus 2 chicken yolks.

[68](#)

Truffle salt can be found online or at gourmet markets.

[69](#)

Paddlefish caviar, as well as the other types of roe featured in this book, is easily available online, if you do not have access to specialty food shops.

[70](#)

Go to [www.goodfishbook.com](http://www.goodfishbook.com) for a demonstration of how to make a quenelle with caviar.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

eISBN : 978-1-570-61821-5

Sasquatch Books  
119 South Main Street, Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 467-4300  
[www.sasquatchbooks.com](http://www.sasquatchbooks.com)  
[custserv@sasquatchbooks.com](mailto:custserv@sasquatchbooks.com)