

DOMAINE SERENE

Featured Recipe

CEDAR-PLANKED SALMON

Paired with the 2006 "Evenstad Reserve" Pinot Noir

Submitted by Vitaly Paley, Chef and Owner of Paley's Place in Portland, Oregon

I once organized a series of dinners at the restaurant focused on the farmers and growers we work with. One of these dinners featured my long-time friend, farmer George Weppler, who grows some of the most beautiful produce in our state. He also is a great cook. During the planning, George mentioned a way he likes to cook salmon. He marinates a piece for a few hours with salt, orange zest, and brown sugar, then rubs it with chopped garlic and places it on a cedar plank, covers it generously with sliced Walla Walla onion and chopped basil, and puts the whole thing on the grill.

This dish tastes as fantastic as it sounds, and it is now a mainstay in our restaurant. If there is a better way to cook salmon, I haven't found it yet. The salmon is best straight from the grill or out of the oven (though it tastes mighty fine cold the next day). It looks very impressive when you place the salmon, plank and all, directly on a serving platter.

When buying salmon always ask if it is wild. If it is not, don't buy it. Try a different recipe. Out of season, wild salmon, available FAS (frozen at sea), is a sustainable substitute to farm raised. (The piece of fish should be cut to fit the plank, leaving 1 to 2 inches all around the cut fish.)

1 (2-pound) piece wild King salmon, scaled (with skin), preferably from the belly of the fish
2 tablespoons kosher salt
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
Grated zest of 2 oranges
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 small bulb garlic, peeled, separated into cloves, and finely chopped
1 Walla Walla onion, halved and thinly sliced
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil

To marinate the salmon, place the fish in a large glass baking dish. Remove any bones with a tweezer or small pliers. In a bowl, mix the salt, brown sugar, and orange zest and generously rub into both sides of the salmon. Cover the fish and refrigerate for 2 hours.

TO COOK ON A GRILL

Preheat a gas grill or get a charcoal grill red-hot. Brush the cedar plank on both sides with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Spread the chopped garlic on the plank the length and the width of the salmon fillet. Place the salmon on the garlic, and cover evenly with the chopped basil and onion slices. The onion here is not just for flavor; it is meant to protect the fish from burning while it cooks, so pile it on both top and sides of the fish. Drizzle with the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil.

The grill should be hot enough to ignite the plank when you place the salmon-topped board on the grill grate. If the plank doesn't ignite, very carefully add a few drops of oil onto the burners or coals. Let the plank burn all the way around the fish (the onion will protect the fish from burning). Once most of the exposed plank has burned, cover the grill to smother the fire. Grill the salmon without turning until medium-rare, or 130°F on an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

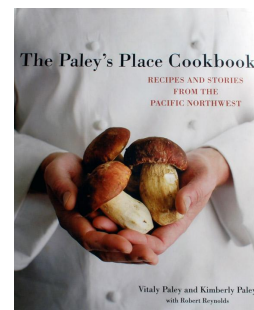
TO COOK IN THE OVEN

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Brush 1 side of the cedar plank with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and place it in the oven for at least 30 minutes to release the wood's aromas. When the kitchen develops a sweet smell reminiscent of a hot sauna, the plank is ready to use.

Spread the chopped garlic on the hot plank the length and the width of the salmon fillet. Place the salmon on the garlic, cover evenly with the chopped basil and onion slices, and drizzle with the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil. Bake the salmon without turning until medium-rare, or 130°F on an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

CHEF'S TIP

For planks, I find that untreated cedar shingles purchased at a lumber yard work best for me at the restaurant. If you do not want to buy a big stack of shingles, you can buy planks at well-stocked cookware stores.



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