

Grilled Shrimp with Spicy Citrus Marinade

A plate of simply sautéed greens will round out this zesty shrimp dish.

Place the shrimp in a nonreactive container (glass, ceramic or plastic) and season lightly with salt. In a food processor, combine the onion, ginger, cilantro, garlic, chili, lime zest, pepper, lime juice and olive oil. Using on-off pulses, pulse until a paste forms. Rub the paste evenly over the shrimp. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for up to 20 minutes.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill or preheat a grill pan over medium-high heat.

Season the shrimp with salt again. Lightly oil the grill or grill pan. Grill the shrimp, turning once, until opaque throughout when pierced with a knife, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer the shrimp to warmed individual plates. Serve immediately with lime wedges. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Lifestyles Series, *Food & Wine Pairing*, by Joyce Goldstein (Time-Life Books, 1999).

Grilled Potlatch Salmon with Mango-Cucumber Salsa

Fresh fruit salsa is a refreshing accompaniment to grilled fish, especially salmon. This salty, sweet and tangy mango mixture, spiked with cumin and cayenne, gets an added crunch from diced cucumber and bell pepper. So the flavors can develop, make the salsa 1 to 2 hours in advance, but not much more, as the mango will become too soft.

In a large nonreactive bowl, stir together the mango, cucumber, garlic, lime juice, cumin, green onions, bell pepper, cayenne pepper, cilantro, 2 Tbs. of the olive oil, salt and black pepper. Taste and adjust the seasonings. Set aside, stirring occasionally, until ready to use.

Brush both sides of the salmon fillets with the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil and sprinkle on both sides with the potlatch seasoning.

Preheat a nonstick grill pan over medium heat. Place the salmon, skin side up, in the pan and cook until golden brown underneath, 5 to 7 minutes. Carefully turn the salmon over and cook until the fish is golden brown underneath and the flesh is opaque throughout, 5 to 7 minutes more.

Transfer the salmon to a warmed platter. Serve immediately and pass the salsa alongside or top the fillets with the salsa. Serves 4.

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Ingredients for Grilled Shrimp with Spicy Citrus Marinade

2 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined

Sea salt or kosher salt, to taste

1 small yellow onion, diced

1 walnut-sized piece of fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

1 small bunch fresh cilantro, chopped

1 Tbs. chopped garlic

2 tsp. minced jalapeño chili

2 tsp. grated lime zest

1 tsp. freshly ground pepper

¼ cup fresh lime juice

¼ cup olive oil

1 lime, quartered (optional)

Ingredients for Grilled Potlatch Salmon with Mango-Cucumber Salsa

1 large ripe mango, peeled, seeded and diced

1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced

1 small garlic clove, minced

Juice of 1 lime

½ tsp. ground cumin

1 cup chopped green onions, green portion only

½ cup diced red bell pepper

¼ tsp. cayenne pepper

1 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro

4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

4 salmon fillets, each 6 oz.

2 Tbs. Williams-Sonoma Potlatch Seasoning

Best Fish to Grill: Firm-fleshed fillets, steaks, spilt fish and whole fish, such as tuna, salmon, shark, halibut, monkfish, striped bass, bluefish, black sea bass, mahimahi and swordfish, are all good choices for grilling. Delicate flounder or sole fillets placed directly on a grill are likely to fall apart. Shellfish, such as scallops, shrimp, squid and lobster, are superb cooked on the grill.

Best Fish to Broil: Fish fillets, such as those from shad, arctic char, whitefish and red snapper, or fish steaks, such as those from salmon, cod, swordfish and tuna, may be broiled in the oven. Whole fish can be difficult to broil because of their girth. Pour ½ inch of dry white wine or water into the pan before broiling and place the fillets close to the heat source.

Best Fish to Bake: Any filleted fish may be baked. Use a shallow baking pan and pour ½ inch of dry white wine or water into the pan before baking to prevent the fish from sticking.

Best Fish to Oven-Poach: Whole fish, such as salmon, bluefish, snapper and grouper, or fillets of bass, snapper, salmon and grouper, may be oven-poached.

Best Fish to Roast: Whole fish of all sizes, such as red snapper, salmon, bluefish, sardines, pompano and whitefish, may be roasted.

Best Fish to Deep-Fry (with Batter): Fillets of cod, sole, fluke and catfish, as well as shrimp and steamer clams, are good choices for deep-frying.

Best Fish to Sauté: All fillets, such as those from sole, tilefish, swordfish and Pacific rockfish, are good for sautéing.

Best Fish to Bake in Parchment: Any fillets or steaks, such as those from halibut, trout, baby Coho salmon, salmon, red snapper and bass, may be baked in parchment.

Best Fish for Soups, Stews and Pasta Sauces: Whiting, trout, monkfish and salmon, as well as mussels, clams, shrimp and squid, are great in soups, stews and pasta sauces.

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Technique Class: Healthy Cooking Series: Seafood

There are as many reasons to make fish and seafood part of your diet as there are fish to choose from. Fish and shellfish are good sources of high-quality protein, beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, and many key vitamins and minerals, and they are generally low in saturated fat. As an added bonus, most fish and seafood are quick to prepare.

Fish Basics

Hundreds of different types of fish, both wild and farmed, are eaten around the world. These denizens of both fresh and salt water cook quickly and are healthful and delicious. Read on to find out how to choose and prepare fish.

Choosing Fish

Buy fish from a specialized market or supermarket fish counter with good turnover. It is best to go to the market with no fixed idea of the fish you want and to purchase what looks freshest and most appealing. Most fish are caught year-round but some have a season, which factors into availability.

Use all your senses to choose fish. In a market in which the fish is packaged, pick it up and inspect it. If it has an off odor, pass it by. Touch the fish; it should feel firm, not flabby. The eyes of a whole fish should be clear, the scales intact and the tail moist. Besides whole fish, you can also purchase steaks, cross-sectional cuts containing a small section of the backbone, or fillets, boneless portions cut from the sides of the fish. Both steaks and fillets should have solid flesh with no gaps.

Frozen fish is fine if it has been professionally flash frozen (home freezers are not cold enough to keep fish frozen properly for long). Defrost frozen fish slowly in the refrigerator.

Serve ¼ to ½ lb. of fish fillets or steaks per person and about twice that amount when whole.

Storing Fish

Unwrap purchased fish or shellfish, place it on a plate or in a bowl, and then rewrap and refrigerate. Live shellfish, such as oysters, mussels, clams and lobsters, must be kept alive in the refrigerator, with their wrappings open so they can breathe.

Cooking Fish

Fish is one of the most versatile foods you can prepare. Its mild flavor and firm texture can be matched with a wide variety of flavors and cooking methods. Most fish and shellfish take a relatively short time to cook, so it is crucial to get it right.



Judging Doneness

A key to preparing fish is to recognize when it has just finished cooking. Fish that is undercooked or overcooked is usually not palatable. Following are three ways to determine when fish is cooked to the correct degree of doneness.

1. Touch the fish with your finger. It should be as firm as the tip of your nose. The more experience you have cooking fish, the easier it is to judge doneness by touch.

2. The flesh, which is translucent before cooking, must be opaque all the way through. (The exceptions are tuna and salmon, which are often eaten rare to medium-rare.) To check, make a small incision in the flesh with a knife in an inconspicuous place.

For shrimp, cut off a slice from the head end to see if it is opaque. For lobster, the cooking time is calculated according to weight, since the flesh is trapped in the shell and cannot be checked. Follow the recipe directions for timing. Mussels and clams are ready as soon as they open. When cooking *en papillote* (in a parchment paper package), the timing is calculated according to the thickness of the fillet. Plan on 10 minutes per inch at the thickest part and then open a packet to check for doneness.

3. The foolproof method of testing for doneness is to use an instant-read thermometer. Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the fish, away from the backbone, which conducts heat. The fish is cooked when it reaches 140°F.

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Shellfish Basics

Shellfish can be divided into two major categories: crustaceans and mollusks. Crustaceans, which include crabs, lobsters and shrimp, have long jointed bodies with exoskeletons, while mollusks might have one shell (abalone, snails), two shells (clams, oysters, scallops) or no shell at all (squid, octopus). Many fresh shellfish, such as clams, lobsters, mussels, oysters and crabs, are live when purchased; they should not be enclosed in plastic bags or submerged in water, or they will die.

When choosing shellfish, they should look wholesome and clean. All bivalves, like clams, mussels and oysters in the shell, must be alive. If they are, their shells will close tightly when you touch them. (The exception are cockles and soft-shelled clams, whose shells are always partially open.) Live crabs and lobsters should show signs of life either in their tanks or on ice.

Shrimp

Shrimp (prawns) range in color from brown, gray or white to striped or spotted. They vary in size from tiny cooked cocktail, or bay, shrimp to much larger jumbo shrimp, which, along with large shrimp, are often called prawns in the United States. They are classified by size according to the number of shrimp per pound: miniature (100), medium (25 to 30), large (16 to 20) and jumbo (10 to 15). Frozen shrimp is usually better quality than shrimp that has been frozen and thawed. Thaw frozen shrimp in the refrigerator, or in a heavy-duty zippered plastic bag submerged in cold water.

Clams

Clams may be either hard or soft shelled; “soft” shells are still quite firm, though thin and brittle. Soft-shell clams include East Coast steamer clams and geoduck; hard-shell clams include littlenecks and Manila clams. Store fresh clams in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper or placed in a bowl and covered with a cloth, and prepare them within 24 hours of purchase.

Oysters

Oysters are available year-round, but they are at their best during the winter months. Live oysters in the shell should be tightly closed when purchased. Store them in the refrigerator, rounded side down and covered with a damp towel, for up to 3 days.

Scallops

These delicate morsels come in two varieties: large sea scallops, which are 1 to 2 inches in diameter, and small bay scallops, which are about ½ inch in diameter. Sea scallops are preferred for sautéing and grilling, while bay scallops are a good choice for soups and sauces. Fresh East Coast sea scallops are often labeled as “day-boat” or “diver” scallops; these designations mean that the scallops have not been frozen. The larger Atlantic sea scallops may be labeled “dry pack” or “chemical free.” In either case, look for scallops that are not sitting in liquid, as some are soaked in phosphates to keep them plump. Scallops should be ivory in color, not white, and they may be somewhat misshapen rather than perfect rounds. Trim off any hard connective tissue on the side of the scallops before cooking.

Squid

Squid, also called by its Italian name, calamari, is considered a mollusk, though it has no shell. It is harvested from spring to early fall on the northern Pacific Coast and from winter to spring on the southern Pacific Coast. Squid is sold either whole or already cleaned; cleaned squid is often missing their tentacles as well as their ink sacs, but they are convenient to use. Squid should either be cooked very quickly, or stewed or braised until tender; otherwise they will tend to be rubbery and chewy.

Essential Seafood Equipment & Tools

- Ceramic or glass bowls or dishes for marinating seafood

- Fish tweezers

- Fish spatula

- High-quality nonstick cookware

- Clam and oyster knives

- Crab mallet

- Lobster and crab picks

- Lobster cracker

Mussels with Fresh Herbs

High in protein and low in fat, medium-sized blue mussels (actually a deep blue-black) are the best type to use for this dish. Serve with slices of crusty bread for soaking up the accompanying broth. This generous dish has fewer than 100 calories per serving.

Place the parsley in a small bowl. Pull enough leaves from the thyme sprigs to measure 1 tsp. Add to the parsley. Place the remaining thyme in a deep pot with a tight-fitting lid. Pull enough leaves from the rosemary sprigs and then mince to measure 1 tsp. Add to the parsley and thyme. Place the remaining rosemary in the pot. Set the mixed herbs aside. Pour the clam juice into the pot.

Place the pot over high heat and bring the liquid to a boil. Add the mussels, discarding any that fail to close to the touch. Cover and return the liquid to a boil. Cook until the mussels open, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and, using a slotted spoon, divide the cooked mussels among warmed wide, shallow bowls, discarding any that failed to open. Spoon the broth remaining in the pot into the bowls, dividing it evenly.

Sprinkle one-fourth of the mixed herbs over each serving. Garnish each serving with a lemon wedge, squeezing it over the mussels, and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Healthful Cooking*, by Mary Abbott Hess, Dana Jacobi & Marie Simmons (Oxmoor House, 2003).

Ingredients for Mussels with Fresh Herbs

2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

8 to 10 fresh thyme sprigs

2 large fresh rosemary sprigs

1 cup bottled clam juice

3 lb. mussels, scrubbed and debearded

4 lemon wedges