

KITCHEN KAPERS**KEN ABRAMCZYK**

Too much fruit? Make tasty salsa for grilled fish

Every summer fresh fruit over-takes the produce aisles. Some shoppers, rabid for the sweet stuff, smash shopping carts into anyone who stands in their way. They fill up the cart with everything, even if they don't quite realize what they will do with them. Three days later, they realize they bought too many pears, pineapples, nectarines, mangos, papayas and kiwis.

Home cooks probably wonder what to do with all that fruit at this time of year. You could add a little sweet variety to main dishes, such as the salmon featured in this week's Taste.

Well, when life gives you lemons and pears and papayas and mangos and pineapples, and plenty of them, make fruit salsas.

Try variety

Traditional salsas call for tomatoes, but chefs who work with south-western cuisine, such as Donna Nordin and Jane Butel, have found salsa variations are limitless.

In her cookbook, "Contemporary Southwest: The Cafe Terra Cotta Cookbook" (Ten Speed Press, 2001), Nordin writes that salsas have no boundaries. Other fruits and vegetables take the place of tomatoes. (Still, nothing beats your own signature salsa, without all that salt, made with homegrown and ripened tomatoes and garden-fresh cilantro.)

Nordin's restaurant serves mango, cucumber, melon and plum salsas, with combinations of pineapple-pear, pineapple-papaya and apple-pear. "Not every salsa goes with every dish, however, a lesson not necessarily learned in all restaurants. A very tart salsa might overpower a delicate fish, but could be just right with red meats or game."

Nordin encourages salsa makers to use fresh ingredients (no canned chilis, please), ingredients should be chopped by hand (no food processors, please) to a uniform size to achieve the right flavor combination.

Veteran salsa makers also know to serve the salsa fresh. And, by all means, experiment to find your own tastes.

In "Jane Butel's Southwestern Grill" (HPBooks, 1999), Butel extols the virtues of salsa. "The flavors that distinguish one grilled, smoked or rotisserie-cooked recipe from another are often the result of the treatment given to the food before or after it is cooked," Butel writes. She uses orange, lemon and smoked pineapple in one of her recipes and a tropical version with papaya, kiwi, pineapple and guava.

I thoroughly enjoy the lime-cilantro flavors on fish, whether with pineapple or papaya. With salsas you can experiment, especially if you cook up a pork loin or chicken wing or without a spicy rub to help accent or balance those dishes.

So don't be afraid to experiment with a little different twist to those fish filets or other grilled foods.

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PAPAYA-MINT SALSA

Not every salsa has to have chiles; sometimes a salsa's role is just to be moist, cool and refreshing. This one makes three cups and is the perfect foil to spicy foods such as a quesadilla made with particularly hot chiles.

- 1 1/2 papayas, peeled, seeded and cut into small chunks
- 1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped mint
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all the ingredients, mix thoroughly, and set aside in the refrigerator.

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on wine
- Cookbook feature



Wet and wild: More than 1.5 million Alaskan salmon are caught annually, harvested from the state's 14,000 miles of coastline.

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
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Salmon doesn't need much — just a squeeze of lemon or lime juice — then quick grilling for an easy summertime meal.

But what a versatile food. Go ahead and count the ways... You can grill salmon, bake it, broil it or sauté it. You can season it with a spice blend, blacken it and sear it or marinate it with soy sauce or lime juice and grill it. Salmon can be poached in water with a splash of a favorite white wine and a bay leaf.

You can create salmon balls or mousses for an appetizer. Stuff a whole salmon for a crew; they'll be wowed by the beautiful presentation.

Of course, you can smoke it.

It's popular

In Alaska more than 1.5 million salmon were caught commercially. During the 1980s and 1990s, Alaska's yearly share of the world's salmon catch ran from 35 to 49 percent.

"The main appeal, and one I always point out to customers, is the Alaska salmon is one of the more beneficial fish, and the taste is outstanding," said



Fresh and fast: Salmon is delicious fresh on the grill, but for a change of pace, try baking it with a pecan crunch coating or the grilled teriyaki salmon (upper right photo).

Alaska Salmon

It's versatile and delicious
grilled, baked, smoked

Shires, seafood manager at Holiday Market in Canton.

Ronald Hertz, owner of Pomeroy's Market in West Bloomfield, sells plenty of sockeye salmon, a popular item with customers, along with whitefish and sea bass.

"The Alaska salmon has more flavor because they're wild, while the farm-raised has controlled feeding," Hertz said. (Alaska law prohibits salmon farms, so all Alaska salmon is wild.)

"The people really jump at the Copper River salmon," Hertz said. "It has a deep red color, and anytime you have a fish with a deep red color, it will have flavor to it. The darker the fish, the richer it is."

Shires enjoys sprinkling salmon with a little garlic, black pepper and olive oil before grilling.

"It doesn't take too long and it is maintenance-free," Shires said.

"I think it's best on the grill," Hertz said. "It's not a frying fish, because it is oily. You can bake it, broil it or poach it, but I like it on the grill. It gets a little crispy on the top."

Hertz squeezes lemon juice, sprinkles salt and pepper, adds a little garlic and tops salmon with paprika before placing it on the grill.

Heart-healthy

Sockeye salmon has the most Omega-3 of any fish, at 2.7 grams per 100-gram portion. The American Heart Association's recently revised dietary guidelines for the first time recommend consumption of two servings per week of fatty fish. Popular examples of fish high in beneficial fats are Alaska salmon and tuna.

Issued in October 2000, American Heart Association dietary guidelines note that rich fish such as salmon are particularly high in Omega-3 fatty acids that protect against heart disease.

"People may wonder why, after learning that they should lower their fat intake, they are now being advised to eat fatty fish," said Joyce Nettleton, nutritionist for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. The AHA's revised guidelines results from studies that have shown that people who eat fish regularly have a lower risk of heart disease. "People who eat fish regularly have a lower risk of heart disease because they eat less saturated fat and more Omega-3 fatty acids from foods."

One category, the saturated fatty acids, tends to raise blood cholesterol levels. Omega-3 fatty acids, however, are chemically different from fatty acids in other fats and, as a result, they behave differently in the body.

One of the more unique ways to cook and present salmon is cooking it on cedar or alder plank, sold at Holiday Market. That cooking tradition with planks started more than 100 years ago with Native Americans, Shires said.

"The cedar has almost a sweet flavor to it, and any smoking will enhance the flavor," said Shires.



But if you want sockeye, you'd better hurry. The "season" here doesn't last much longer than the month of July, said Shires. "But in August, the season starts," he said.

For more information and recipes on Alaska salmon, visit the ASM website at www.alaskaseafood.org. See related recipes inside Taste.

Salmon

ALASKA SALMON BAKE WITH PECAN CRUNCH COATING

- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 4 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts
- 2 teaspoons chopped parsley
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1/4 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 4 (4 to 6 oz. each) Alaska Lemon wedges

Preheat oven to 450° F. Mix together mustard, butter and honey in a small bowl, set aside. Mix together bread crumbs, pecans and parsley in a small bowl, set aside.

Season each salmon fillet with salt and pepper. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet or broiling pan. Brush each fillet with mustard-honey mixture. Pat top of each fillet with bread crumb mixture.

Bake for 10 minutes per inch of thickness, measured at the thickest part, or until salmon just flakes when tested with a fork. Serve with lemon wedges. Makes 4 servings.

Recipes courtesy of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Association.

Consumer poll honors Piero Antinori

The June 30, 2001 issue of the Wine Spectator reports that 17,000 wine lovers worldwide cast their votes online. For the Hall of Fame, the person, in their opinion, who has done the most to advance wine quality is Piero Antinori.

Very fitting in our opinion, but we wonder do you, as readers of this column, know a significant amount about Piero Antinori? Assuming not, here goes.

Antinori is the 26th generation guiding the family-owned winery in Tuscany bearing his ancestral name. With one foot in the long tradition of his winery, founded in 1385, and the other in innovation, his dynamic vision has led not only Antinori wines, but many throughout Italy to attain world-class recognition.

This was not easy. Although the comparison may not be apparent, Italy is the same size as the state of Arizona with a population of 5 million, but Italy has a population of 57 million opinionated people — many of them making wine. Italy produces and



exports more wine than any other country in the world.

Antinori is a confirmed oenophile.

This is a French term, but the Italians use it too. It means he believes that the combination

of different elements, such as soil, exposure, elevation, climate, grape clonal selection, and the way a specific site is cultivated, make a wine what it is. Because of this, Antinori has purchased estates with unique viticultural attributes, concentrated in central Italy — in Tuscany, principally — but also in Umbria.

"Tuscany," he said, "for emotional, cultural and historic reasons." But it's also because he's con-

vined Tuscany is the best winegrowing region in the world for modern wines with regional personality. As a Tuscan, he believes that the soul of a wine is equally important — it's the reflection of a man's traditions, values, culture, foods and passions.

Food and wine

On the point of food and the soul, in the same Wine Spectator poll, the favorite cuisine was Italian. We had the opportunity recently to taste a number of Antinori wines with dishes prepared at Giovanni's Ristorante.

Wine Picks

Change of pace white wines make special summer sippers.

- Pick of the pack: 1999 King Estate Reserve Pinot Gris Oregon \$20
- Very good deals: 2000 Pine Ridge Chateau Blanc-Vioglier \$11 (16 percent Vioglier); 2000 Campenille Pinot Grigio Gravel del Fiume \$10; 1999 Henry Estate Oregon Gewurztraminer \$10 (delicate style); 1999 De las Fresas Cotes-du-Rhone Saint-Exupery Blanc \$10; 2000 Drey Creek Vineyard Chateau Blanc \$9; 2000 Maroues de Caceres White Rioja \$7 (100 percent Vzz); Spain's best white grape)

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