

SALMON AND SOLE WITH HAZELNUT, LEMON, & PIMENT d'ESPELETTE CRUST WITH CHERRY-CAPER VERJUS SAUCE



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SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

Fish:

3 pieces center-cut salmon, about 3 ounces each
6 pieces sole fillet, each about the same size as the salmon (3 ounces each)

Crust:

7 tablespoons (1 stick minus 1 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened (about 3.5 ounces)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hazelnuts, coarsely chopped (about 3.5 ounces)
1 tablespoon Meyer lemon zest (from 2 lemons)
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon piment d'Espelette (or substitute mild chili powder)
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
Salt, to taste

Cherry-Caper Verjus Sauce:

1 cup fresh cherries, pitted and quartered (about 4.5 oz)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter (1 stick or 4 oz)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup toasted hazelnuts, chopped (about 1 oz)
Juice of 1 lemon (about 2 tablespoons)
1 tablespoon capers
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup verjus (*or substitute red wine vinegar, slightly diluted with water if strong*)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

METHOD

1. Assemble the Fish:
Trim salmon into 3 evenly sized pieces, about 1 inch wide and 2½ inches long.
Place one sole fillet underneath each piece of salmon, and top with a second sole fillet, sandwiching the salmon in the center.
2. Make Hazelnut Compound Butter (Crust):
In a bowl, mix softened butter, chopped hazelnuts, lemon zest, lemon juice, piment d'Espelette, panko, and a pinch of salt to form a coarse, spreadable paste.
3. Form the Crust:
Spread about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mixture between two sheets of parchment paper.
Roll or press into a sheet about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, sized to cover the top of each fish portion.
Cut crust to match fish portions and place on top of each sole-salmon sandwich.
Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to firm up.
4. Cook the Fish:
Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place fish on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 6 minutes.

Switch to broil and cook for 2 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown. Watch carefully to prevent burning.

5. Make the Sauce:

In a saucepan over medium heat, melt butter and cook until it turns nutty brown (*beurre noisette*), about 3–4 minutes.

Add cherries and chopped hazelnuts. Sauté for 2 minutes.

Stir in capers and verjus. Let simmer for 3–4 minutes, reducing slightly.

Add lemon juice and parsley. Stir to finish.

6. To Serve:

Let the fish rest briefly after broiling.

Plate 3 fish portions per plate, spaced about **1 inch** apart.

Optional: Arrange steamed asparagus in between the fish.

Spoon the warm cherry-caper sauce over and around the fish.