

# POLLACK

At this time of the year the chances are that you are catching a fair number of good sized Pollack. Although part of the Cod family, Pollack are not as valued as Cod because the flesh tends to be less white and the flavour is not as good. However Pollack make a good substitute for many Cod recipes, especially where the fish is being used as a vehicle for strong flavours. Pollack is particularly useful for fish pies (see January's recipe sheet) and fish

cakes. Pollack can be baked whole using the same guidelines as given for Cod. To keep a supply of Pollack for use after the season comes to an end, freeze the fish as fillets in sizes and quantities useful for your own needs. Some of your catch can be cut up as cutlets about one inch thick with the central backbone left in place. These cutlets can then be foil-wrapped and frozen individually so you can remove as many as you need at one time.

## Recipe no. 1

### PARSLEY AND TARRAGON FISH CAKES

**12oz (350g) cooked pollack**  
**1lb (450g) cooked mashed potato**  
**2oz (50g) fresh breadcrumbs**  
**3 tablespoons double cream**  
**2 teaspoons anchovy essence (or Thai fish sauce)**

**Dry breadcrumbs**  
**3 tablespoons chopped parsley**  
**1 teaspoon dried tarragon (or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon)**  
**Salt and pepper**  
**Oil for trying**

Mash the fish with a fork. Add the mashed potato, fresh breadcrumbs, cream, anchovy essence, herbs and seasonings. Beat to a smooth paste. Shape into flat cakes and coat with dry breadcrumbs. Fry in oil on each side until golden brown in colour. (If you like the taste of tarragon you might like to increase the amount you use).

## Recipe no. 2

### CREOLE CAKES

**1lb (450g) cooked pollack, flaked**  
**1oz (25g) butter**  
**6oz (175g) wholemeal breadcrumbs**  
**1 onion, grated**  
**1 clove garlic, crushed**  
**1 tablespoon chopped parsley**

**1/2 teaspoon dried oregano**  
**Salt, pepper**  
**1 egg, beaten**  
**Dry breadcrumbs**  
**Oil for frying**

Mash the fish with a fork. Melt the butter in a pan and add to the fish with the wholemeal breadcrumbs, onion, garlic, herbs and seasoning. Mix thoroughly and shape into small flat cakes. Coat with egg and then with dry breadcrumbs and fry in oil on each side until golden brown.

**Recipe no. 3****THAI FISH CAKES WITH GREEN BEANS***This gives 4 cakes per person:***1lb (450g) pollack filleted, skinned and cut into chunks****1 tablespoon Thai fish sauce (nam pla) or anchovy essence****1 tablespoon Red Curry Paste (bought, or home made - see recipe below)****1 kaffir lime leaf or 1 strip of lime zest finely shredded (or lemon zest will do)****1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander (leaves and stalks)****1 egg****1 teaspoon brown sugar****1/4 Teaspoon salt****1 1/2oz (40g) French beans thinly sliced into rounds****5 fl oz (150ml) sunflower oil**

Put the chunks of raw pollack into a food processor with the fish sauce, curry paste, lime leaf or lime zest, chopped coriander, raw egg, sugar and salt. Process until smooth, then stir in the sliced green beans until thoroughly mixed. Divide the mixture into 16 portions, roll each one into a ball, and then flatten into a disc (2 inches or 6 cm). Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the fish cakes in batches for 1 minute on each side until golden brown. Lift out and drain on kitchen paper then serve. These are nice with rice, salad and sweet and sour sauce. They also freeze well after cooling down. Warm them through thoroughly when defrosted.

**RED CURRY PASTE****5 large red finger chillies, roughly chopped****1 teaspoon chopped fresh root ginger****3 tablespoons chopped garlic****1 teaspoon ground coriander****2 teaspoons paprika****1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder****1/2 teaspoon salt****1 tablespoon chopped lemon grass****3 tablespoons roughly chopped onions****1 teaspoon ground cumin****1 tablespoon sunflower oil**

Blend all the ingredients in a food processor until smooth, if necessary, add a little water to help it puree more easily. You can use this curry paste for the above recipe and for making curries with chicken, vegetables etc.

**Recipe no. 4 BAKED POLLACK WITH LEMON, BAY LEAF, ONION AND GARLIC***Serves 4 people***8oz (225g) chopped onions****4oz (100g) butter****Juice of 1/2 lemon****Rind of 1 lemon cut in thin strips****10 fl oz (300ml) fish stock****4 x 8oz steaks or fillets of pollack****4 chopped garlic cloves****3 fl oz (85ml) white wine****1/2 teaspoon salt****2 bay leaves sliced or crushed if dried****Salt and pepper**

Fry onions and garlic in half the butter until soft. Add white wine, lemon juice, salt, half of the lemon rind and half the bay leaves. Cover and leave to cook gently for 40 minutes. This is a 'confit' and can be prepared ahead of time. Preheat the oven to 230°C/450°F/Gas 8. Take a flameproof casserole dish large enough to hold the fish in a single layer. Place the onion 'confit' with half the fish stock in the bottom and lay the fish on top. Sprinkle the fish with salt and pepper, the rest of the bay leaves and lemon rind. Cover with foil and bake for 13 minutes. Remove foil and bake for a further 4 minutes. Remove fish and place on 4 warm plates and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add the rest of the fish stock to the casserole dish, bring to boil and add the remaining butter. Reduce to a thick sauce then pour around the fish and serve.

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## COD AND POLLACK ROES

At the beginning of the year many of the Cod and Pollack caught contain roe. Many fisherman discard the roes during cleaning of the catch and this is a pity because whether eaten on their own, or incorporated into other dishes, the roe is tasty and very nutritious. They are also twice as calorific! In all fish **the hard roe is that of the female fish and the soft roe that of the male.** The hard roes are sacs of tiny eggs and the soft roes are the fish milt. Because roes are very rich and you often end up with a large quantity at the end of a day's fishing, it is useful to know that you can **freeze roe** easily. It requires no preparation, you simply pack it into small containers or plastic bags in the quantities

### FEMALE (hard) ROES

Small female roes (chipolata sausage size and less) make a tasty accompaniment to a cooked breakfast. It is an ingredient that used to be part of the traditional Irish Breakfast. First the roes should be poached in a little water sharpened with malt vinegar (1 part vinegar to 5 parts water). The vinegar serves 2 functions - it reduces the very rich taste and helps to prevent roes spilling into the water if there are any holes in the skin. When they are cooked (the roes will be firm right through) they should be removed from the water and allowed to

you can use. All the recipes given below refer to Cod roe but Pollock (and Whiting) can be used in the same way.

**!!!!It is important** to be careful when removing roes from the fish. Try not to damage the outer skin as when poaching hard roes, if there are holes, the roes leak out into the cooking water and much of the roe is lost. **Do not boil** the roes vigorously when poaching. Bring the roes very slowly to the boil then simmer gently. Even if the roes are not damaged before cooking, they are likely to burst if boiled too rapidly!!!!

cool. Cooking time is likely to be at least 30 minutes. (Ideally you poach the roes the night before). Very lightly oil a frying pan and warm the roes through allowing them to brown a little. Grill some tomatoes, bacon and scramble some egg. Serve with your favourite breakfast sauce - the roes are just like little fish sausages! If the roes come from a larger fish, poach in the same way and allow to cool. You can remove the skin carefully from larger roes. Then slice the roes about 1cm thick and fry in the same way.

### OTHER RECIPES FOR FEMALE ROES

#### Recipe no. 1

#### TARAMASALATA

This is a simple recipe which calls for smoked cod roe but there is no reason why you should not make Taramasalata with poached cod roe. In this case you should salt the cooking water. You will need:

**4 slices of white bread**  
**8 oz (225g) smoked cod roe**  
**1/4 pint (150ml) olive oil**  
**Black pepper**  
**3 fl oz (80ml) of milk**

**1 onion, chopped**  
**Juice of 1 lemon**  
**Chopped parsley**  
**Chopped green olives**

Soak the bread in the milk. Scoop out the roe from the skin into a liquidiser. Add the onion, olive oil and lemon juice. Squeeze out the bread from the milk and add the mixture, discarding the milk. Liquidise until smooth. Season with black pepper and garnish with parsley and green olives.

**Recipe no. 2****TARAMASALATA traditional Greek Recipe****150g of salted cod roe****1 slice of stale bread****Juice of 1-2 lemons****1 medium onion grated or very finely chopped****1 boiled potato****1 cup olive oil**

Remove crusts from the bread, soak it and squeeze dry. If salted cod roe is used, rinse it in water in a fine-meshed sieve to remove some of the salt. In a liquidiser, or blender place the roe, onion, bread and potato with oil and lemon juice and blend until smooth. Serve with a drizzle of good olive oil.

**Recipe no. 3****SCALLOPED COD ROE**

*This makes a tasty snack for lunch, supper or as a starter. This quantity serves 4*

**1lb (450g) cod roe****4 spring onions, finely chopped****2 oz (50g) breadcrumbs****2 oz (50g) melted butter****1 hard-boiled egg, finely chopped****Salt and pepper**

Simmer the cod roe in salted water for 10 minutes. Drain and mash with a fork. Mix with melted butter. Add the spring onions, hard-boiled egg and breadcrumbs. Season to taste and spoon into scallop shells, ramekins or a small flan dish. Dot with butter and bake at 190°C, gas mark 5 for 20 minutes. Serve with salad.

**MALE (soft) ROES**

In Cod, Pollack and Whiting the male (soft) roes are creamy or pinky white, frilly ribbons. These are not precooked and are best eaten, lightly fried, on toast.

A small quantity goes a long way! For roes from larger fish, the frills can be cut into short lengths with scissors.

**Recipe no. 4****ROES ON TOAST**

Coat the roes well in flour generously seasoned with salt and pepper. (If you like garlic, you could use garlic salt - or celery salt as an alternative, to flavour the roe). Melt some butter in a pan (it is better than oil) and whilst the heat is high, chase the roes round the pan to seal the outside and form a light crispy crust. Turn the heat down low and allow the roes to cook for 10 minutes or so depending on their size. (Roes from small fish and Whiting need less time). Even if cut into lengths, the roes do need plenty of time to cook into the folds, so check before serving that there is no trace of raw, pinkish roe.

Prepare some toast and butter lightly. Put the roes sparingly on toast - a little goes a long way. They can be spread over lightly and seasoned. I like them sharpened with vinegar, lemon or lime juice and sprinkled with parsley or coriander, or garnish with your favourite herbs and if you a garlic fan you could fry the roes with a crushed clove of garlic or two.

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Fresh cod has a lovely flavour and can be enjoyed baked or roasted after the surface has been sprinkled with salt and pepper, lemon juice and dotted with butter. The fillets need to be thick ones from a good size fish so that the fish does not dry out when cooking, and the temperature in the oven high - 230°C/Gas Mark 8. Check after 10 minutes or so. The fish is cooked when the flakes are white and can be pulled apart with a fork. If the fillets are

smaller and thinner then they should be covered with foil to keep some of the moisture in. Fish cooked like this can be served with any number of sauces, homemade or otherwise. You can also coat the surface of the fish before cooking with pesto or a 'cook-in' type sauce - such as oriental style ones which are good, my favourite is Trinidad lime and ginger.

### Recipe no. 1

### BAKED COD PORTUGUESE

*If you are feeling adventurous try this recipe. - Serves 4*

**2lb (900g) thick cod fillet, skin on and cut into 4 pieces.**

**1 large onion cut into quarters and finely sliced**

**4 sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained and finely chopped**

**4 fl oz (120ml) white wine**

**salt and pepper and parsley sprigs to garnish**

**30oz (75g) butter**

**4 tomatoes skinned and chopped**

**2 tablespoons chopped parsley**

**10fl oz (300 ml) fish stock - you can use fish stock cubes**

Preheat oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. In a shallow flameproof casserole large enough to hold all the fish, melt half the butter and fry the cod skin-down for 1 minute until crisp and golden. Remove carefully and set on one side. Add onion and fry for 5 minutes then add fresh and sun-dried tomatoes, stock and white wine. Bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Place cod skin-side up on the tomato and onion mixture, transfer the casserole to the oven and bake for 5-6 minutes. Remove from oven, lift out cod onto a warm plate, replace casserole on stove over a high heat, add remaining butter and reduce by boiling rapidly for about 4 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking, until sauce is thick. Stir in parsley, season and cook for 30 seconds more. Spoon the sauce on to 4 warmed plates, put cod on top and garnish with parsley. Serve with small boiled potatoes or rice, and green salad.

### Recipe no. 2

### WHOLE BAKED COD

Another option is to bake a Cod whole. Choose one that you can fit into a baking dish and the oven! Clean the fish but leave the head on. When the body cavity is clean you can pack it with something like prawns, cooked mushrooms or a tomato and herb mixture then season it and wrap in foil to make a loose parcel, so that air can circulate inside whilst cooking. Bake in a medium temperature oven, 200°C, gas mark 6. Time will depend on size of fish - to check if the fish is cooked, open the parcel and see if the fish comes cleanly away from the bones. If not, reseal the parcel and cook for a bit longer. Fish cooked like this can be brought to the table whole and served if you feel brave, or skinned, boned and plated in the kitchen!

Because Cod cooked like this is relatively dry, potatoes cooked in a liquid make a good complement. Try **Potato Daube**.

**Recipe no. 3****POTATO DAUBE**

Serves 4

**5 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed**  
**4-5 tablespoons olive oil**  
**3 or 4 bayleaves**

**3/4 pint (1/2 litre) salted water**  
**2 lbs (900g) firm-fleshed potatoes, sliced and wiped dry**

Set the oven to 200° gas mark 6. Cook the garlic cloves in the simmering salted water for about 15 minutes then puree the garlic through a sieve back into the cooking water. Grease an ovenproof casserole with olive oil, then pack in half the potatoes, distribute the bay leaves, salt lightly depending on the saltiness of the garlic water and add the remaining potatoes. Pour over the garlicky water so that the potatoes are just covered by the liquid but not drowned. Dribble olive oil over the surface and cook in the oven for 45-60 minutes. The potatoes absorb the garlic flavour and liquid and soften whilst cooking and the topmost layer is nicely crispy.

If you are not keen on garlic and like mash with fish, try **Mashed Potatoes flavoured with Spring Onions**. Cook and mash potatoes as usual adding a generous knob of butter, salt and pepper and perhaps a little milk, or cream. Then, depending on quantity, take some spring onions, slice them finely into rings and mix in with the mash just before serving.

**Recipe no. 4****CHARLES FONTAINE'S FISH PIE**

Serves 4

Because Cod are not as commonplace as they were a few years ago, and there are restrictions about the number you can land, they should be enjoyed for their own sake. It is a pity to use them for fish cakes and the like, although you can make a deliciously up-market fish pie with Cod. Try Charles Fontaine's Fish Pie as recommended by Rick Stein.

**1 pint (600ml) milk**  
**1 pint (600ml) water**  
**1/2 onion sliced**  
**1/2 lemon**  
**2lb filleted fish#**  
**salt and fresh ground pepper**

**2oz (50g) butter**  
**1.5 oz (40g) flour**  
**2 eggs\***  
**2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped**  
**2oz (50g) grated cheddar cheese**

\* If preferred you can substitute the eggs with some cooked mussels. You can either use native mussels or the larger New Zealand green-lip mussels are even nicer. If bought fresh, steam the shells for a few minutes until they open then remove the flesh and discard the shells.

#If you don't have 2lb of cod, you make up the weight with a combination of white fish such as whiting, pollack and ling.

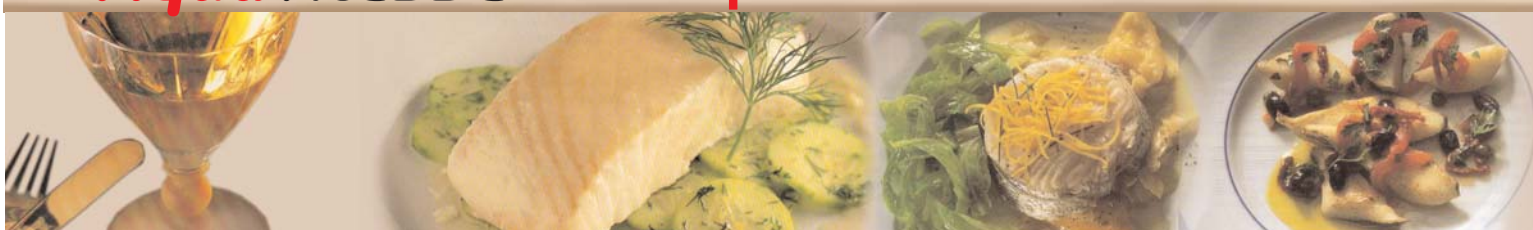
**For the mashed potatoes:**

**3lb (1.5kg) white potatoes** (choose a variety that is 'floury' and mashes well)  
**1oz (25g) butter, 4 fl oz (120ml) milk**

Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Put the milk, water, onion and \_ lemon into a large pan, bring to boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the fish and poach gently for 5 minutes then remove. Strain the liquid into a shallow pan and boil rapidly to reduce by half. Melt butter in a pan and stir in the flour, cook for 2 minutes stirring all the time. Allow it to smell slightly 'nutty' without colouring too much then remove from heat and cool slightly. Gradually stir in the reduced poaching liquid until you have a smooth sauce. Return this to the heat and simmer over a very low heat for 30 minutes stirring occasionally. Do not let it burn. Boil the eggs for 10 minutes to hard boil then peel, cool slightly and rough chop. Remove skin and bones from poached fish and break into chunks and arrange in shallow ovenproof dish with the chopped egg or mussels. Sprinkle over the parsley. Remove the sauce from the heat, add the cheese, season to taste and pour over the fish mixture. Boil the potatoes in lightly salted water until soft, drain and mash until smooth, adding butter and milk. Spread this over the sauce and fork the surface into a wavy pattern. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes and serve with mushy peas.

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# DOGFISH

On days when there is not much else about you can usually expect to catch some Dog fish.

For the return in usable fish that you get, Dog fish can be quite hard work; their sandpapery skins are tough to remove and the gutting process can be unpleasant because the intestines are huge and more like a mammal's.

However it is worth persisting because the minor, cartilaginous bones are easy to deal with and the flesh lends itself to being complemented by

particular, and strong flavours and methods of cooking. It is also a useful addition to a fish soup. Spurdogs are the best eating and what are normally offered in the fish shop. You probably know Dogfish from your local fish and chip shop as 'Rock Salmon' or 'Huss'. You can of course fry the dogfish you catch, but here are some more adventurous recipes to try. All the recipes are for 4 people.

## **Recipe no. 1**      **GRILLED MARINATED DOGFISH WITH A GARLIC SAUCE**

*(this recipe is based on one from an early Rick Stein cookbook)* Serves 4

**1 1/4 lb (600g) dogfish cut into 4 pieces**

**1 clove of garlic, chopped**

**1/2 fl. oz (15ml) olive oil**

**1/4 teaspoon (1.5ml) seasalt**

**1/2 teaspoon (2.5ml) oregano or marjoram**

**Juice of half a lemon**

**1/2 oz (15g) fresh bread crumbs**

**1/2 oz (15g) grated Parmesan cheese**

Place the fillets in a shallow dish. Add the chopped clove of garlic, the olive oil, salt, oregano and lemon juice, and leave to marinate for at least half an hour, turning and coating the fish occasionally. Liquidize the bread to make fresh breadcrumbs and mix with the Parmesan. Mix the chopped clove of garlic into the mayonnaise. Turn on the grill. Remove the fillets from the marinade and mix the breadcrumbs and Parmesan into the marinade and thoroughly coat the dogfish with the mixture. To make the sauce, place the fish stock in a small pan, bring to the boil and reduce by half. Remove from the heat. Put the maonaise in a mixing bowl and pour on the hot stock, whisking all the time as you pour. Keep the sauce warm while you cook the fish, but don't stir the chopped tomato into the sauce till just before servig the fish: in this way it will taste tart and fresh. Place the dogfish fillets on a grilling tray. Cook them under the grill, keeping the tray near the bottom so that the breadcrubms do not burn. When the coating is golden brown, the fillets will be cooked. Serve the fillets on warm plates with the sauce poured to one side of them.

## **Recipe no. 2**      **BAKED DOGFISH WITH CORIANDER AND GARLIC**

Serves 4

**1 1/2 lb (700g) skinned dogfish fillet, cut into 8 pieces**

**Juice of a lemon or lime**

**1 finely chopped small onion**

**3 tablespoons of olive oil**

**Seasalt and black pepper**

**1 chopped clove of garlic**

**1 de-seeded and choped green chilli**

**3 tablespoons of choped coriander leaves**

**Lemon or lime wedges for garnish**

Season the dogfish with salt and pepper and then pour over the lemon or lime juice. Roll fish to coat all surfaces with the juice then leave for 30 minutes. When you are ready to prepare the dish, cook the garlic, onion and chilli in the olive oil, heating gently and not allowing the contents to brown. Preheat the oven to 18C/35F/Gas 4. Oil an ovenproof dish large enough to accommodate the fish in one close-fitting layer and arrange the fillets in it. Pour the marinading juices over the fish. Sprinkle the chopped coriander over the fish then spoon over the oily garlic, onion and chilli mixture. Leave uncovered and bake for 15-20 minutes until the fish is just cooked. Serve the dish immediately. Seasoning with salt firms up the dogfish flesh and marinading with the citrus juice improves the flavour.

**Recipe no. 3****YUCATAN-STYLE FISH TORTILLAS**

*This Sophie Grigson recipe should appeal to fans of Mexican food and barbecuing Serves 4*

**1 1/2lb (700g) dogfish fillet**

**For the Marinade you will need:**

**1/4 teaspoon black peppercorns**

**1/2 teaspoon each of cumin seeds, coriander seeds, dried oregano, ground turmeric, paprika.**

**3 crushed garlic cloves**

**juice of 1 lime**

**1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper**

**1/2 teaspoon seasalt**

**juice of 1 Seville orange or 1/2 grapefruit**

**For the Tomato Salsa:**

**1lb (450g) ripe tomatoes, de-seeded and finely diced**

**1/2 finely chopped red onion**

**2 de-seeded and finely chopped green chillies**

**1 teaspoon sugar**

**salt and pepper**

**1 finely chopped or crushed clove of garlic**

**juice of 1 Seville orange or 1/2 grapefruit**

**4 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander**

**For serving:**

**8 soft flour tortillas**

**lime wedges**

**1/4 pint (150ml) soured cream**

**Preparation at least one hour before cooking:**

Cut the fish into 8 portions. Make the marinade by dry-frying the peppercorns and the cumin and coriander seeds over a moderate heat until they turn a shade darker and start to shed their aroma. Tip into a bowl and cool slightly. Grid with the oregano, turmeric, paprika and cayenne. In a mortar combine the crushed garlic with the salt then gradually work in the spices and the citrus juices. Smear this mixture all over the fish and leave to marinade for at least an hour and preferably longer up to 4 hours. To make the salsa, mix all the ingredients together then taste and add extra seasoning to taste. Chill the salsa until required.

**To cook:**

Preheat the grill or barbecue. Wrap the tortillas in foil and warm through in the oven or on the edge of the barbecue. Grill the fish, turning carefully once, until just cooked through. To serve your guests, just lay each piece of fish on a warm tortilla, top with a good dollop of salsa and a spoonful of soured cream, fold the tortilla round the filling and then hand out them out with lime wedges to your guests. On the other hand you may wish to be more informal and let everyone help themselves.

**Recipe no. 4****AUNTY MARY'S FISH HOT POT**

*And finally, a very traditional and simple dish Serves 4*

**1 1/2 lb (700g) skinned dogfish fillet (or other white fish such as whiting, pollack)**

**Fish stock**

**1 oz (25g) butter**

**salt and pepper**

**1 oz (25g) grated flavoursome cheese**

**4 sliced onions**

**4 potatoes**

**2 tablespoons of cream**

Poach the fish gently in a little stock and cut into chunks. Fry the onions in butter. Boil the potatoes in lightly salted water and dice when cooked. Grease an ovenproof dish and layer the potatoes, onions and fish, starting and ending with potatoes and sprinkling each layer with salt and pepper. Spoon the cream and top with the grated cheese. Bake at 22°C/425F/Gas 7 for 10 minutes. If liked, for a crispier finish, brown under the grill. A bay leaf or 2 layered into the ingredients will impart a sympathetic flavour.

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# BREAM

You can usually expect to catch 2 types of bream in the waters off Brighton. Most often you will land Sea Bream but you can also expect the occasional Gilt-head Bream. Both fish are well flavoured and can be especially successful when cooked on a barbecue or with Mediterranean ingredients like olive oil, garlic, aromatic herbs, olives and anchovies.

Compared to other species, bream are on the small side and best cooked on the bone. For recipes where the skin may be eaten it is best to descale the fish before cooking. Bream is also complimented by the flavour of fennel and the first recipe uses its strong flavour with orange to give an unusual dish:

## **Recipe no. 1 BAKED BREAM AND FENNEL WITH ORANGE AND PROVENCAL HERBS**

Serves 4

**1 teaspoon dried or 1 tablespoon fresh herbes de Provence (mixed herbs)**

**1 orange**

**2 tablespoons Pernod or Ricard**

**3 bulbs of fennel, outer leaves removed**

**2 fresh bay leaves cut into thin strips or 2 dried bay leaves, crushed**

**3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced**

**50ml ( 2 fl oz) olive oil**

**4 whole sea bream weighing about 2kg (4 1/2 lb) in total**

**3 anchovy fillets, chopped**

**1 teaspoon salt**

**1 large onion, chopped**

**25ml (1 fl oz) white wine vinegar**

**1 teaspoon sugar**

Thinly peel the zest from half the orange with a potato peeler and cut it into short, thin strips, like pine needles. Put all the ingredients (including the juice of the whole orange) except the fish into a heavy-based pan and cook gently, covered, for about 15 minutes or until the fennel is soft. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Remove any scales from the fish then wash and dry it thoroughly. Slash the fish three times diagonally on both sides cutting right down to the bone. Season generously with salt and pepper both inside and out. Place half the fennel and onion mixture in the bottom of a shallow ovenproof dish, place the fish on top and spoon the rest of the fennel and onion over it. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil covering the fish and bake for a further 5 minutes. If you use bream you have frozen make sure they are thoroughly defrosted before cooking this dish. If you use fewer larger fish allow longer for cooking. This is also a good recipe for Sea Bass.

## **Recipe no. 2 STEAMED SEA BREAM WITH GARLIC, GINGER AND SPRING ONION**

*A recipe with an oriental style. Serves 4*

**2.5cm (1 inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped**

**4 bream about 350g (12 oz) each**

**2 tablespoons soy sauce**

**25ml (1 fl oz) sesame oil**

**4 spring onions**

**50ml (2 fl oz) water**

**4 garlic cloves, finely chopped**

Sprinkle the ginger over the scaled fish and place on heatproof plate. Bring the water in a steamer up to a fast boil, put the plate in and cover. Steam the fish for 15 minutes then transfer them to a warmed serving plate. Scatter the spring onions over the fish. Pour the juice from the plate into a small shallow pan and add the soy sauce and water. Heat and pour over the fish and spring onions. Heat the sesame oil in a small pan. When it is very hot, add the garlic and let it fry for 5 seconds. Pour the oil and garlic over the fish and serve.

**Recipe no. 3****THAI RED FISH CURRY***Serves 4*

**2 medium or 1 large whole bream**  
**sunflower or vegetable oil for frying**

**juice of 1 lime**

**For the sauce:**

**1-1 1/2 tablespoons red curry paste**  
**300ml (1/2 pint) coconut milk**

**1 tablespoon fish sauce (nam pla)**  
**5 fresh or dried kaffir lime leaves**  
**1 teaspoon sugar**

**To garnish:**

**lime wedges, fresh coriander leaves, fine strips of fresh hot red chilli**

Scale the bream and make 3 diagonal slashes on each side of them. Sprinkle the lime juice over both sides of the fish and leave for 15 minutes. Pat dry on kitchen paper. Pour enough oil into a pan large enough to take the fish to fill it to a depth of about 1cm (1/2 inch). Heat over a medium heat until fairly hot. Lay the fish in the oil and fry briskly for about 4 minutes. Turn carefully and cook for another 4 minutes on the other side. The fish should be verging on done but still a mite away from it, as they will carry on cooking in their own heat while you make the sauce. Cook the whole fish for a minute or two longer on each side. Carefully lift the fish out on to a warm serving plate and keep warm. Pour all but a tablespoon of the oil out of the pan and add the curry paste and lime leaves and fry, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and add the sugar and fish sauce. Stir well and then leave to simmer for 5 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Pour the sauce over the fish and garnish with lime wedges, a handful of coriander leaves and strips of hot red chilli.

**Recipe no. 4 ROAST SEA BREAM WITH BRAISED RED CABBAGE AND ROSTI POTATOES***A recipe for the cooler months of the year Serves 4*

**2 good size sea bream (1 1/2lb each)**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt**

**Melted butter for brushing**  
**freshly ground black pepper**

**For the red cabbage:**

**275g (10 oz) red cabbage**  
**150ml (5 fl oz) Fish stock or Chicken Stock**  
**150ml (5 fl oz) red wine**  
**1 teaspoon salt**

**175g (6oz) unsalted butter**  
**100g (4 oz) onion, diced**  
**25ml (1 fl oz) wine vinegar**  
**1 tablespoon sugar**

**For the potatoes:**

**400g (14 oz) potatoes**  
**50ml (2 fl oz) clarified butter for frying potatoes**

**25g (1 oz) smoked bacon cut in strips**  
**salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Preheat the oven to 200oC /400oF/Gas 6. Remove the outer leaves of the red cabbage and cut out the white core. Slice the cabbage as finely as possible then cut slices into smallest possible pieces. Place in an ovenproof dish with 50g (2 oz) of the butter, half the stock and the remaining cabbage ingredients. Cover and place in the oven for 1 1/4 hours. Stir occasionally. Remove from the oven, add the remaining stock, bring to the boil, stir in the rest of the butter. Keep warm.

To make the rosti, peel the potatoes and shred them on the largest grid of a grater onto a clean tea towel. Gather the edges together and squeeze as much moisture out of the potatoes as possible. Don't rinse the potatoes or you will remove the starch that binds the potatoes into a pancake. Season the potatoes with salt and pepper and add the bacon. Divide into 4 portions and mould into balls with your hands. Pour clarified butter into a small non-stick or well-tempered frying pan and add one ball of potato and bacon. Flatten it over the base of the pan to about 10cm (4 inches) in diameter using a fish slice. Fry over a gentle heat for about 5 minutes. Work the fish slice under the pancake to free it then turn it over to cook on the other side for 5 minutes. Towards the end of the cooking time press out and pour off excess butter. Place the rosti on some absorbent paper to remove any remaining greasiness.

To cook the fish, pre-heat the oven to its highest setting. Scale the fish and brush them inside and out with melted butter then season with salt and pepper. Place in a roasting tin and roast in the oven for about 20 minutes (depending on the size of the fish) basting a couple of times with the juices from the tray. To serve, place the fish on a large oval plate and pour over the juices from the pan then bring to the table with the rosti potatoes and the braised red cabbage.

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# MACKEREL

**The best way to eat mackerel is to cook it on the day it is caught!** This said, when the mackerel season gets under way they can be caught in numbers far exceeding the keenest appetite! To enjoy the full and distinctive flavour they must be kept cool on board and cleaned as soon as possible, removing all the black skin and gut that lines the body cavity and coats the backbone. The texture of the fish deteriorates rapidly and if the flesh goes soft and limp and begins to fall away from the bones, the fish do not cook well. You can do no better than grill them with lemon juice, salt and pepper. They are an oily fish and do not need to be greased in any way. For the larger fish if you are prepared to invest the time to fillet them, they cook under the grill in 2-3 minutes and are

## SMOKING

We use a smoker designed for outdoor living and you can buy 'home' smokers at camping shops, garden centres and other outlets which sell equipment for outdoor activities. The smoker consists of a metal box with a lid which clamps into place. Inside there will be a tiered trivet to lay the fish on, a metal tray under which you place wood dust and shavings. A smaller metal dish in which you put herbs if you are going to smoke your food outside is also provided. We use our smoker on the gas hob in our kitchen. The fish are cleaned, generously seasoned and laid on the stacked trivets.

simply delicious. If you like to eat fish at breakfast time, you can choose no finer start to the day, served with coarse brown bread or oatcakes.

But what to do with the dozens of fish that might be caught in one day? Like most other fish, they can be frozen but whereas this works very well in many cases (cod, pollack, bream for example) mackerel don't survive the freezing process well in our opinion. We use two methods for extending the life of the mackerel harvest - SOUSING and SMOKING. Below I tell you how to treat mackerel using these 2 methods, and give some recipes which enable mackerel to be enjoyed in a number of other guises.

Place the lid on, clamp into place and put it on the hob. Our smoker fits over two gas hotplates. Turn the gas down moderately low and smoke for about 20-30 minutes depending on the number and size of the fish. You can vary the amount of oak dust and chippings you use to get a darker or lighter smoke. Smokers come with full instructions. Once smoked, you can keep several fish in the fridge for several days. You can eat them hot with new potatoes, broad beans and horseradish, or cold with a salad. To extend the pleasure of eating smoked mackerel you can make pate:-

## Recipe no. 1

### SMOKED MACKEREL PATE

Serves 4

**350g/12 oz smoked mackerel fillets, skinned**  
**juice of 1 lemon**  
**75g/3oz cream or curd cheese**

**lemon slices**  
**100g/4oz butter**  
**salt, pepper**  
**chopped parsley**

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Place mackerel, melted butter and lemon juice in a blender and blend until smooth. Add the cream cheese in small quantities and blend again. Season to taste and spoon into individual ramekin dishes. Place in the fridge to chill. Serve garnished with a little chopped parsley and very thin slices of lemon, with thinly sliced brown toast. This pate freezes very well and can be potted up in conveniently sized containers, frozen, and eaten as required. If you like a strong lemony flavour, increase the amount of juice.

**SOUSING** This is a traditional method of extending the 'shelf life' of fresh oily fish.

**Recipe no. 2**

**SOUSED MACKEREL**

Serves 4

**4 mackerel, cleaned**  
**1 onion finely sliced**  
**1 bayleaf**

**salt, black pepper**  
**1 pint spiced pickling vinegar**

Place mackerel in covered casserole, season and lay onion rings and bayleaf over and in between fish. Pour over vinegar. (If preferred you can use half water/half vinegar). Make sure fish are just covered in the liquor. Bake at 160°C/325°F/gas mark 3 for 1 hour. Leave to cool. These can be kept refrigerated for at least a week. To vary the flavour to suit your taste you can add garlic, dried or fresh chillies or other spices, use different vinegars for example wine or cider vinegar, or even vinegar left over from pickles such as pickled walnuts.

**For an alternative version of the above recipe and as a simple first course try the following:**

**Recipe no. 3 CHILLED FILLETS OF MACKEREL WITH CIDER AND AROMATIC HERBS**

Serves 4

**600ml (1 pint) cider**  
**3 shallots, thinly sliced**  
**1 sprig of thyme**  
**1 sprig of fennel**  
**1/2 teaspoon pickling spices**  
**4 large mackerel fillets or 8 small ones**

**1 carrot, thinly sliced**  
**1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**1 sprig of lovage or celery tops(optional)**  
**1 teaspoon salt**

Bring all the ingredients, except the mackerel, to the boil in a pan then simmer for 30 minutes. Place fish skin side up in a shallow pan. Pour over the hot liquid and bring back to the boil. When it has bubbled once, remove it from the heat and leave to cool before chilling overnight. Remove the fillets from the liquid and serve on individual plates and garnished with sliced carrot and onions and a few spoonfuls of the sieved liquid.

**To enjoy hot mackerel with exciting oriental flavours, try the following Nick Nairn recipe -**

**Recipe no. 4 SEARED MACKEREL FILLETS WITH STIR-FRIED VEGETABLES**

Serves 4

**50g (2oz) fine green beans, halved**  
**4 spring onions cut into 5cm (2in) lengths**  
**250g (9oz) egg thread noodles**  
**4 mackerel fillets weighing about 150g (5oz) each**  
**A few drops of Chilli Oil**  
**15g (1/2 oz) fresh coriander leaves, chopped**

**50g (2oz) asparagus, cut into 5cm (2 in) lengths**  
**1 small courgette cut into 5cm (2in) batons**  
**1-2 tablespoons sunflower oil**  
**juice of 1/2 lime**  
**1 teaspoon Thai fish sauce (Nam Pla)**  
**salt and freshly ground white pepper**

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Add the green beans and bring back to the boil. Then add the asparagus and bring back to the boil. Add the spring onions and courgette, bring back to the boil again and drain immediately. Refresh under cold running water to arrest the cooking and set the colour. Leave to drain on plenty of kitchen paper. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Drop in the noodles, then remove the pan from the heat, cover and leave for 4 minutes. Drain and set aside. Add a teaspoon of the sunflower oil so the noodles won't stick together. Heat a frying pan until really hot, add a splash of sunflower oil, then the mackerel fillets, skin-side down and fry for 4 minutes. Turn over and fry for 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate, pour over half the lime juice, season and keep warm. Heat a little more sunflower oil in the pan, add the blanched vegetables and stir-fry for just 1 minute. Then add the chilli oil, Thai fish sauce, remaining lime juice and seasoning. To serve, divide the noodles between 4 warmed plates and spoon on the vegetables then top with the fish, skin-side up. To moisten the dish you can add a little of your favourite oriental sauce.

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