

LAUREL KALLENBACH

Have Your Fish and Be Healthy, Too

THREE ECO-CHEFS SHARE THEIR SEAFOOD SECRETS.

Unless you've been living on the bottom of the sea for the past several years, you've heard some of the controversy about the health benefits and risks associated with eating fish. A natural source of protein with positive effects on heart health, fish can contain hazardous mercury and sometimes PCBs (toxic industrial chemicals that accumulate at the bottoms of rivers, lakes and coastal areas and build up in the fatty tissues of fish).



Thai Shrimp Curry with Steamed Rice,
photographed at the Monterey Bay
Aquarium, is served with a green salad.

PHOTOS BY BATISTA MOON STUDIO

THAI SHRIMP CURRY

Dory Ford, executive chef for Bon Appétit Management Company
at the Monterey Bay Aquarium (www.MBayAq.org)

Serves 4

Most experts agree you can safely reap the benefits of eating fish by limiting consumption to once per week (or less often if the fish is high in mercury). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns that pregnant women, nursing mothers and children should not eat swordfish, shark, tilefish and king mackerel because of high mercury content. The FDA also advises women and children to limit tuna consumption.

Then there are the tricky environmental issues: Many fish, including Atlantic cod, orange roughy, Chilean seabass and bluefin tuna, are dangerously overfished. Some aquaculture methods, including salmon farming, produce concentrated fecal waste that pollutes surrounding waters. And the methods for catching some fish in the wild—such as trawl nets, dredging and traps—kill other species. (Swordfish, for example, are caught on long lines that entangle endangered sea turtles.) Seafood Watch estimates more than 75 percent of the world's fisheries are either fully fished or overfished, so these issues are more important than ever.

Fortunately, Seafood Watch can help you make ocean-friendly choices, and The Green Guide evaluates mercury and PCBs in seafood. Both offer downloadable pocket guides to healthy, sustainable choices (see “Pick-of-the-Catch Websites,” page 76).

A few supermarket labels are also helpful. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifies sustainable fisheries; you'll find MSC-labeled fish at stores such as Whole Foods, Wild Oats, Safeway and even Wal-Mart. And as always, look for “dolphin safe” and “turtle safe” designations.

This Thai favorite is traditionally served with steamed rice and a side salad of lettuce, cucumber, basil and cilantro to aid digestion. Shrimp are low in mercury, and Seafood Watch recommends you choose domestic rather than imported shrimp. U.S. shrimp trawlers use turtle-safe nets, and U.S. environmental laws minimize the damage shrimp farms cause to mangrove forests.

CURRY SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons canola oil**
- 2 shallots, sliced**
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic**
- 2½ teaspoons curry powder**
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- 1 teaspoon ground chili paste (optional)**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 1 stalk lemongrass, cut into 1-inch pieces and bruised with knife**
- 1-inch piece fresh ginger, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices**
- 3 cups coconut cream or canned coconut milk**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar**

RICE

- 1½ cups jasmine rice, steamed;**
- follow package directions**

SHRIMP AND VEGETABLES

- 1 tablespoon canola oil**
- 1 pound U.S. trawl-caught or farmed shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- ½ yellow onion, cubed**
- 1 carrot, sliced into ½-inch rounds and blanched**
- ½ cup cauliflower, cut into bite-size pieces and blanched**
- 1 cup green beans, trimmed, sliced lengthwise and blanched**
- 1 cup asparagus, cut into 2-inch lengths and blanched**
- 1 cup broccolini, cut into 2-inch lengths and blanched**
- 1 ripe tomato, core removed and cut into thin strips**
- 3 kaffir lime leaves, cut into slivers**
- 10 fresh Thai basil leaves, julienned**

- 1. TO MAKE CURRY SAUCE:** Heat oil in large saucepan over moderate heat. Add shallots, garlic, curry powder, turmeric and chili paste and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute.
- 2.** Add soy sauce, lemongrass and ginger and stir for another 30 seconds. Add coconut cream, salt and sugar; bring to a boil.
- 3.** Allow sauce to cool, then purée in blender and strain through a course sieve to remove lemongrass and ginger. You may refrigerate the sauce, covered, for up to a week.
- 4. TO MAKE RICE:** Steam 1½ cups jasmine rice, following package directions.
- 5. TO PREPARE SHRIMP AND VEGETABLES:** Heat 1 tablespoon oil in large saucepan over moderate heat; add shrimp and sauté until half cooked. Add 1 cup curry sauce and bring to a simmer. (If you prefer a saucier curry, add 1½ cups.) Refrigerate the rest for later use.
- 6.** Add onion; blanched carrots, cauliflower, green beans, asparagus and broccolini; and tomato. Reduce heat and simmer for 1 to 2 minutes.
- 7.** Just before serving, stir in lime and basil leaves. Remove from heat; serve over steamed rice.

Rick Bayless' recipe for Salmon in Luxurious Green Sesame Pipián is a snap to make. It's served here on an Annielglass Ultramarine Dinner Plate, designed by artist Ann Morhausen of Santa Cruz, California.



SALMON IN LUXURIOUS GREEN SESAME PIPÍÁN

Rick Bayless chef/owner of Frontera Grill and Topolobampo,
Chicago (www.RickBayless.com)

Serves 4

This recipe uses bottled tomatillo salsa and tahini (sesame paste) instead of traditional ground pumpkin seeds for the Mexican-style *pipián* sauce, so a zesty dinner is only minutes away. Seafood Watch recommends Marine Stewardship Council–certified, wild Alaskan salmon, which is low in mercury and contains few or no PCBs. Farmed salmon can be problematic because farms release waste directly into the ocean and salmon farmers often rely on antibiotics and pesticides to control disease.

- 2 cups store-bought or homemade tomatillo salsa**
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable or olive oil**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
- 3 tablespoons tahini**
- ½ teaspoon salt, or to taste**
- ½ teaspoon sugar, or to taste**
- 1 cup peas (heaping)**
- 4 boneless, skinless, wild salmon fillets, 5 ounces each, about ½-inch thick**
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, for garnish**
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro, for garnish**

1. In a blender or food processor, process salsa to a smooth purée.
2. Heat oil in a very large (12-inch) skillet over medium-high heat. When quite hot, add salsa all at once. Stir as salsa reduces to consistency of tomato paste, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in broth and tahini. Return to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 10 minutes. Taste and season with salt (usually about ½ teaspoon) and about ¼ to ½ teaspoon sugar. While sauce is simmering, steam peas until just hot and tender.
4. After sauce has cooked 10 minutes, nestle salmon fillets completely into sauce. Continue simmering gently until fish flakes when pressed firmly, usually 5 to 6 minutes. Check by lifting a fillet from the sauce on a metal spatula and pressing with your finger or the back of a spoon.
5. Transfer a fish fillet to each dinner plate. Spoon a portion of the sauce over top. Strew with peas, sesame seeds and cilantro.

CONSCIOUS KITCHEN

COOKING FOR SOLUTIONS

Cooking for Solutions, an extravaganza of fine food and wine produced in ways that preserve the health of the soil, water and ocean wildlife, is held each May at California's Monterey Bay Aquarium. This year's event, May 18 and 19, features celebrity chef honorees Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger of Border Grill (Santa Monica, Las Vegas) and Ciudad (Los Angeles) and actor/writer John Cleese. Check www.CookingForSolutions.org for more details.

PICK-OF-THE-CATCH WEBSITES

- **GotMercury.org**
A calculator figures how much fish and shellfish you can safely eat per week. www.GotMercury.org
- **Green Guide**
Downloadable Smart Shoppers' Fish Picks Card rates seafood choices according to mercury levels. www.TheGreenGuide.com
- **Environmental Defense**
Best and worst seafood choices from ecological and contamination standpoints. www.OceansAlive.org
- **Seafood Choices Alliance**
Environmentally conscious suppliers, species and restaurants. www.SeafoodChoices.org
- **Seafood Watch**
Downloadable seafood guide listing fish according to their level of endangerment. www.SeafoodWatch.org
- **Marine Stewardship Council**
Stores where you can buy certified sustainable fish. www.MSC.org



Crisp, chopped cucumber salad and lemony carrot vinaigrette are the perfect complements to buttery black cod. The dish is served on an Annieglass pedestal slab.

BLACK COD WITH SHISO-CUCUMBER SALAD AND CARROT VINAIGRETTE

Jerry Traunfeld, executive chef,
The Herbfarm, Woodinville, Washington (www.TheHerbfarm.com)

Serves 6

Shiso is an aromatic green leaf, available at gourmet stores or Asian markets, used to flavor Japanese dishes such as sushi and tempura. (You may substitute chopped mint or cilantro.) Seafood Watch recommends black cod, also known as sablefish, from Alaska or British Columbia, where the populations are abundant and the fisheries are well managed. Black cod contains moderate amounts of mercury, so eat this fish no more than twice a month.

FISH

2 pounds black cod fillet
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1½ tablespoons sugar

CARROT VINAIGRETTE

¾ cup carrot juice
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1 teaspoon chopped ginger
1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup mild vegetable oil,
such as canola

SHISO-CUCUMBER SALAD

3 tablespoons seasoned rice wine vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons finely chopped ginger
1 teaspoon finely chopped serrano chile
¼ cup finely chopped red onion
1½ tablespoons chopped shiso (or 2
tablespoons chopped mint or cilantro)
1 medium, thin-skinned cucumber,
preferably seedless
2 shiso leaves, sliced in very thin strips
(for garnish)

1. Cut cod in 6 pieces of equal weight and toss with soy sauce and sugar in a mixing bowl or resealable plastic bag. Allow fish to marinate in refrigerator for about 2 hours.
2. **TO MAKE CARROT VINAIGRETTE:** Combine carrot juice, shallot, ginger, lemon juice and salt in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and cook until liquid boils down to about one-third of original amount. Cool.
3. Pour carrot reduction into a blender and, with the motor running, slowly pour in oil.
4. **TO MAKE SHISO-CUCUMBER SALAD:** Stir together vinegar, lemon juice, ginger, chile, onion and shiso. Let dressing sit for 30 minutes to mellow onion and meld flavors.
5. Slice cucumber in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds with a teaspoon, and cut in thin, half-moon-shaped slices. Toss cucumber with dressing.
6. **TO COOK FISH:** Preheat oven to 325°F. Lift fish from marinade and place on baking sheet. Bake 12 to 14 minutes, or until a small amount of liquid collects at the bottom of the fillets and fish flakes easily when nudged with your finger.
7. **TO SERVE:** Put small mounds of cucumber salad on each of 6 serving plates. Prop a fish fillet on each. Drizzle about a tablespoon of vinaigrette alongside fish. Sprinkle with thin strips of shiso. 