

Ocean Wise cooking

August 12, 2015. 9:49 am • Section: Word of Mouth
By Mia Stainsby Vancouver Sun



When Jane Mundy wrote *The Ocean Wise Cookbook* five years ago, most of the chefs who contributed recipes were from Vancouver where the move to seafood sustainability in restaurants began in Canada.

The Ocean Wise Cookbook 2 (Whitecap Books) is fresh off the presses and this time, it's truly Canadian with chefs from across Canada contributing 150 recipes using sustainable seafood from local waters. "This time, once I got in touch with them, they were all willing," says Mundy.

Restaurants seem to be where the rubber hits the road with seafood conservation awareness. "It trickles down to customers," says Mundy. "It's estimated that 90 per cent of all large predatory fish are already gone from the world's oceans and over-fishing is the greatest threat to our oceans today.

"In Vancouver, we're lucky when it comes to farms. We know where our meat and dairy come from. There's Colin the chicken from Portlandia but who knows about Charlie the albacore tuna?"

The Ocean Wise program, founded by the Vancouver Aquarium with Vancouver chef Robert Clark, has spread to 600 restaurants and seafood stores across Canada. The Ocean Wise icon signifies a sustainable seafood choice.

The cookbook, with 150 seafood recipes “gets people in the kitchen, excited about how to cook sustainable fish,” says Mundy. “I hope they try new things and think outside the box.” That might mean getting cosy with mackerel or sardines or squid. Or asking questions like what fishing method was used.

It could also mean dropping the attitude when it comes to frozen seafood. Frozen seafood doesn’t have to mean freezer burn and pulpy flesh. If seafood is sold with the FAS (frozen at sea) label, it was frozen within an hour of the catch at a very low temperature. The process prevents oils from migrating to the core of the fish, leaving it dry and tasteless after a month in the home freezer.

(A Nova Scotia ice fisherman noticed the fresher flesh when it was caught in -40 F air temperature. At higher freezing temperatures, ice crystals formed, damaging the flesh.)

And fish frozen with heads on is even better. “The more you cut a fish, the more you expose the flesh and the greater chance of freezer burn and oils can migrate to the cut area and oxidize,” Mundy says.

When buying fish, you’re looking for firm flesh where muscles haven’t broken down, eyes should be clear and it should smell like the ocean.

She also gives a shout-out to canned seafood, declaring North America is playing catch-up to Europe when it comes to good-quality canned seafood. Cookbooks like Tinned Fish Gourmet by Barbara-Jo McIntosh and purveyors like Raincoast Trading which cans tuna and salmon sustainably-caught wild tuna and salmon are helping shift attitudes in B.C.

And controversy around salmon farmed in ocean pens doesn’t mean all farmed seafood is to be avoided. In fact, almost all the shellfish on the West Coast is farmed, and very sustainably so. Beluga sturgeon and its caviar might be endangered and off-limits but B.C. farmed sturgeon and its eggs (Northern Divine caviar) are not. The recipe for farmed sturgeon caviar with cauliflower panna cotta sounds simply divine! And salmon, if farmed on land, is quite sustainable.

On the topic of oysters, Joe Fortes chef Wayne Sych knows the subject thoroughly. In the cookbook, he suggests newly minted raw oyster eaters start with Kusshi variety. “They’re small with a fresh salty, then sweet flavour.” Other sustainable B.C. oysters worth meeting are Royal Miyagi (delicate melon-like with faint creaminess), Satori (mild, briny with dash of melon), Sawmill Bay (strong, distinct sweet and salty taste) and Fanny Bay (briny with a cucumber finish).

“All kinds of fish farms are wrong but a lot are not,” says Mundy.

Next on her agenda is a mission to make kelp “the next kale. “It would be great if we can get people into eating more seaweed. It’s packed with nutrients and there’s lots of it,” she says.

Should that arouse your curiosity, she’s included her own recipe for seaweed salad in the book.

Recipes

Grilled Lingcod Tacos, Goddess Sauce and Summer Coleslaw



This is from Chris Mills, Joey Restaurant Group chef.

Chris Mills shares a unique tip. He uses wooden clothes pins to keep the tacos folded until they're ready to serve. In place of ling cod, you can use Pacific halibut or other sustainable firm-fleshed fish. You can substitute your favourite hot sauce for the Valentina sauce.

Goddess Sauce:

1/2 cup (125 mL) mayonnaise
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped green onions
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh Italian parsley
1/2 tsp (2 mL) chopped garlic
1 tbsp (15 mL) lemon juice
1/2 tsp (2 mL) dried tarragon
1 anchovy filet, chopped (optional)

Salt

Black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor, blending until smooth.

Summer Coleslaw:

3 cups (750 mL) thinly sliced green cabbage
1/2 cup (125 mL) peeled and grated carrot
1/4 cup (60 mL) thinly sliced red onion
1/4 cup (60 mL) chopped and loosely packed cilantro
1/4 cup (60 mL) rice wine vinegar
2 tbsp (30 mL) extra virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp (1 mL) sea salt

Place cabbage, carrots and red onions in a colander; rinse thoroughly with cold water to crisp. Drain for 5 minutes.

Whisk cilantro, vinegar, oil and salt in a large bowl. Add vegetables. Toss well to coat.

Tacos:

1 lb (450 g) ling cod, cut into strips

Salt

Black pepper

Twelve 6-inch (15 cm) white corn tortillas

1/4 cup (60 mL) grated cheddar cheese

2 avocados, diced

1 cup (250 mL) shredded lettuce

1/2 cup (125 mL) diced tomatoes

1/4 cup (60 mL) diced white onions

1/4 cup (60 mL) Goddess Sauce

3 tbsp (45 mL) Valentina hot sauce

Grill fish on the barbecue with salt and pepper until just cooked, about 90 seconds per side. (Or heat 1 tbsp / 15 mL olive oil in a heavy, large skillet and pan-fry until cooked through.) Place the tortillas on a preheated barbecue with grated cheese on them. Spoon a teaspoon of Goddess Sauce onto the cheese and place the cooked fish on top. Pile the remaining ingredients on top of each individual taco and gently fold them in half. Finish with a drizzle of Valentina hot sauce.

Serve with a side of coleslaw and the remaining Goddess Sauce in a small bowl. Leftover Goddess Sauce will keep refrigerated for up to 1 week, and goes well with just about any white fish.

Makes 4 servings.

Spring Salmon Tataki with Celeriac Remoulade and Vodka-spiked Salmon Roe



Chef Chris Whittaker from Forage restaurant at The Listel Hotel fell in love tataki when he visited Japan. He uses the technique often at the restaurant, using local, sustainable seafood.

Salmon tataki:

1 1/2 lb (750 g) Chinook salmon filet, skin removed

Using a blow torch or barbecue, sear the salmon very lightly until the flesh just begins to colour. Plunge the salmon filet into ice water to stop cooking. Remove once cool and pat dry. Slice thinly with a very sharp knife.

Roe:

1/4 cup (60 mL) salmon roe

1 tbsp (15 mL) vodka

Mix roe and vodka together and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Seasoned remoulade:

1 cup (250 mL) finely diced celeriac

1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped parsley

1 tbsp (15 mL) capers, minced

1 tsp (5 mL) caper brine

Dash of Tabasco sauce

1 cup (250 mL) remoulade (or mayonnaise)

Add celeriac, parsley, capers, caper brine and Tabasco to the remoulade and mix well. Can be made ahead of time and refrigerated.

To serve:

1 cup (250 mL) chopped watercress

Place watercress in a row across the plate. Arrange tataki on top of watercress. Make sure each piece of salmon gets a little remoulade and roe on top as this is the seasoning for the fish.

Makes 4 servings.

Sturgeon with Nori and Caviar



Chef Chris Stewart of Terrace Restaurant at Mission Hill Winery in Kelowna contributed this recipe. Let the fishmonger skin and filet the sturgeon, he says. (The skin of sturgeon is like armour.) If your budget doesn't allow for sturgeon caviar, salmon or trout fish roe will do.

Pickles:

1/2 cup (125 mL) white wine vinegar
1/4 cup (60 mL) sugar
1/4 cup (60 mL) water
1 tsp (5 mL) mustard seeds
1 tsp (5 mL) kosher salt
1 tsp (5 mL) coriander seed
1 bay leaf

1/2 cup (125 mL) shallots, peeled and cut in half
1/2 cup (125 mL) green onion, white part only, sliced

Combine vinegar, sugar, water, salt, spices and herbs in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer to dissolve sugar. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. Pour liquid over sliced vegetables. Allow this to cool to room temperature for about 20 minutes and refrigerate.

Nori Oil:

1 cup (250 mL) canola oil
2 sheets nori sushi paper, cut into thin ribbons
Heat oil to lukewarm. Add nori strips to the oil and allow the flavour to infuse for 20 minutes.

Sturgeon:

1/4 cup (60 mL) canola oil
Four 5 oz (140 g) farmed sturgeon pieces
1 tsp (5 mL) sea salt
2 tbsp (30 mL) unsalted butter
1/3 oz (10 g) Northern Divine sturgeon caviar

Heat the oil in a non-stick pan until very hot. Season the fish with salt then place in the pan. Let it cook in the oil for 40 seconds. Add the butter. When the butter has melted, remove the pan from the heat and the butter will give the fillets a golden brown crust. Return to heat, flip the fish over and continue to spoon the browned butter over the fish until cooked, about 2 minutes.

To serve: Spoon a small amount of nori oil over the fish and top with a dollop of caviar and garnish with pickles. Makes 4 servings.