



Smoked Sardines with Heirloom Tomatoes and Herbs

Serves 4

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2 pounds super-ripe heirloom tomatoes

(I prefer a colorful mix of varieties)

Two 6-ounce cans smoked sardine fillets

Salt

1/4 cup chopped fresh soft-leaved herbs such as

cilantro, parsley, mint, or chervil

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced

Slice the tomatoes 1/2 inch thick and distribute them among 4 plates.

Flake the sardines over the tomatoes and drizzle the sardine oil over the top. Season to taste with salt and sprinkle the herbs and scallions over all. Serve immediately.

Pounded Tuna with Spices and Herbs

Makes about 20 canapés

One 6-ounce can albacore tuna, packed in water

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard

Pinch of salt

1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon

1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

5 slices dark bread, such as rye or pumpernickel

Open and drain the can of tuna. Place the fish in a medium bowl and mash with a whisk until it is a fine paste. Add the olive oil, mustard, and salt. Continue to whisk until all the oil has been incorporated. Add the chopped herbs and mix to combine. Check for seasoning and let sit for at least 20 minutes to allow the flavors to develop. Keep at room temperature if you are serving immediately. If not, then place in the fridge. The mixture keeps, tightly covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Meanwhile, trim the crusts off the bread slices and cut them into quarters. You can do either triangles or squares, depending on your preference. Place the bread pieces on a baking sheet and bake them until they are just crisp, about 4 minutes.

To compose the canapés, take two teaspoons and gather about half a spoonful of the tuna mixture in one of them. Carefully shape the tuna

with the other spoon, transferring the mixture between the spoons with a cupping motion until you have an attractive mound. Gently transfer the mound onto a toast and serve immediately.

Txalaparta Bread Dip

Serves 4 as an appetizer

1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 salt-packed anchovies or 6 oil-packed anchovy fillets
2 cloves garlic, grated on a Microplane or very finely minced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Pinch of red chile flakes
1 loaf crusty baguette, sliced

In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat until warm. Add the anchovies and garlic and cook for about a minute, just until the garlic begins to brown. Remove from the heat and add the parsley and chile flakes. The oil will pretty much dissolve the anchovy fillets, giving you an incredibly flavored oil to dip your bread into. Best if served hot.

Spaghetti with Mackerel Sauce

Serves 4

1 pound spaghetti
Salt
One 7-ounce can smoked mackerel, drained
1/2 cup pitted green olives, with or without pimientos, rinsed
1 large egg yolk
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Cook the pasta in boiling salted water until al dente, following package directions.

While the pasta is cooking, combine the mackerel, olives, egg yolk, and lemon juice in a food processor. When the mixture is reduced to a fine purée, with the machine running, add the olive oil in a slow, steady stream. Season to taste with salt. Drain the pasta, return it to the pot, add the mackerel sauce, and toss until well coated. Serve immediately, sprinkled with chopped parsley.



Pink Salmon Cakes with Dill and Mustard

Serves 4

Two 7- to 8-ounce cans pink salmon
Salt
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
Pinch of ground mace
1/4 cup panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs)
or fine dried bread crumbs
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
2 tablespoons butter
Lemon wedges

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Drain the salmon. Flake the fish into a bowl, being careful to remove any small bones or skin that may be mixed in. Season with salt and add the mayonnaise, mustard, mace, bread crumbs, and dill. Mix gently with your fingers until it is well combined. Form into four even patties about 1 inch thick and allow to sit for about 5 minutes to allow the bread crumbs to absorb the flavor.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, heat the butter until foaming. Add the salmon cakes and cook until they begin to turn golden on the edges, about 5 minutes. Don't touch them while they're browning. Once the edges have browned, transfer the pan to the oven and bake for 5 minutes to heat through. Flip the cakes onto plates and serve with lemon wedges.