

Baked Salmon in Green Herb Sauce

Serves 4

The sauce for this dish is best made at the last moment. Before the spinach and herbs are pureed in a blender, they are blanched in the salmon cooking liquid, which contains wine. When fresh from the blender, the sauce is a beautiful dark green, but the color begins to fade after an hour or so (the taste is not affected), because of the acidity in the wine. The salmon is best served lukewarm or at room temperature.

3 shallots, chopped (1/3 cup)
1 cup fruity dry white wine
¾ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 skinless center-cut salmon fillet (about 1¼ pounds)
1½ cups loosely packed spinach leaves (about 3 ounces), washed and dried
1¼ cups loosely packed fresh herbs (a mixture of chopped chives and parsley and tarragon leaves)
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
Pinch of cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the shallots, wine, half the salt, and the pepper in an ovenproof stainless steel or other nonreactive skillet. Arrange the salmon on top of the shallots and bring the mixture to a boil over high heat.

Place the skillet in the oven and bake the salmon, uncovered, for about 12 minutes, or until it is medium-rare. Remove the salmon from the skillet and place it on a plate.

Add the spinach and herbs to the liquid in the skillet and cook over high heat for about 2 minutes, until the herbs are wilted and soft.

Transfer the mixture to a blender and blend into a smooth puree. Add the mayonnaise, cayenne, vinegar, and the remaining salt and blend for a few seconds. Add the oil and continue processing for about 10 seconds.

Spoon the sauce onto a large platter, arrange the salmon on top, and serve.
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