Fresh black sea bass gets stovetop steam treatment

Chef Mike Lata of FIG and The Ordinary advocates simple techniques for cooking fish at home, such as steaming. "It shows the flavor and integrity of fresh fish beautifully," he says. "If you don’t have a steamer at home, I recommend it; it’s very inexpensive and a great tool to have."

Steamed Black Bass With Blistered Cherry Tomatoes

Ingredients
- 1 cup pine nuts
- 1 post cherry tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar
- 4 fl-ounce filet black bass, skin on
- 2 sprigs mint, leaves sliced into thin ribbons
- 2 sprigs basil, leaves sliced into thin ribbons
- A small thyme sprig

Directions
In a large bowl, toss cherry tomatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season with salt and a few twists of freshly cracked pepper. Four tomatoes onto a sheet pan and place under the broiler. Cook just until the skins of the tomatoes start to blister, about 30 seconds. Remove pan and pour tomatoes back into the bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let sit for 10 minutes, or until ready to use. Add 1 teaspoon olive oil, shallot, garlic and crushed red pepper to the large skillet that you used to toast the pine nuts, (no need to clean it). Place over medium heat and cook, stirring, until garlic and shallots become soft and lightly golden, about 3 to 4 minutes.

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Stir in sherry vinegar and the blistered tomatoes, including any juice that may have released. Over medium-high heat, quickly bring the mixture to a simmer. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil and 1 tablespoon each of mint and basil and stir to combine. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper to taste. Using a sharp paring knife, score the skin of the fish and lesion both sides with salt. Rest an 8-inch stainless steel basket inside a slightly larger (at least 10 inch) skillet. Pour enough water in the skillet to reach about half of an inch up the side of the steamer basket. Piece a place of parchment paper inside the steamer plate and place fish skin side down onto the parchment. Lay a sprig of thyme on top of each filet and drizzle with remaining olive oil. Cover the steamer basket and place plate over medium-high heat. Bring the water to a simmer and cook for 5 to 7 minutes. Keep an eye on the water level as it can evaporate easily, adding more as needed. The fish is done when an instant-read thermometer probes to an internal temperature of 145°F. Plate fish on a bed of tomatoes, drizzle with olive oil and serve immediately.

Black sea bass

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Fishing, working to restore the health of ocean species and the fish populations that call them home are understandably fraught with hailing any single species. The prevailing American for tuna, salmon and shrimps, which account for half of the seafood consumed nationwide, has pressured the environment in dangerous ways. But the black sea bass could probably stand a little more attention from eaters. The multi-fish filet, prized for its firm, delicate texture, is one of many fish, new catch for harvest- ing. It’s already popular with sporting types — recreational fishermen in 2013 caught more than 2 million pounds of black sea bass — but the fish isn’t yet attuned for the fish recognition of wreck fish. Here, seven reasons why that situation ought to change.

1. Black sea bass is a member of the snapper family, isn’t always black. Smaller specimens are dusky brown with light-colored bellies. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “dormant” makes turn bright blue and have a blue hue on their heads during spawning season.

2. Black sea bass is one of the most sought after fish in the world. It’s a large fish that can grow to more than 3 feet long and weigh up to 10 pounds. The largest specimen on record was caught in 1969 in the Gulf of Mexico and weighed 200 pounds.

3. Black sea bass is a hard-fighting fish that can put up a good fight. It’s known for its speed and agility, and it’s not uncommon for anglers to battle a black sea bass for several hours before finally bringing it to the surface.

4. When shopping for black sea bass, look for white, translucent flesh, bright eyes and pink gills. Some fins of the fish below hooked black sea bass is lighter than the black sea bass above it. Trawling was banned in the South Atlantic in 1989. But no matter how the fish was harvested, it can be substituted for snake in most recipes.

5. In 2000, the federal government began imposing catch limits on the southern black sea bass fishery. The catch limits were put in place to protect the species. The catch limits vary depending on the season and the area of the sea bass.

6. For reasons that still confound scientists, black sea bass begin their lives as females and become males as they mature. Black sea bass are big enough to be caught on 20-pound line, but unsuspecting fishermen have landed mass numbers of male black sea bass. The species has a 3:63 sex ratio.

7. Federal law allows recreational fishermen to take up to 15 black sea bass, although only a few states allow the species to be caught. The species is listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is protected under the Endangered Species Act.

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