

## Front Burner

### Today

#### Open House

**WHAT:** The Southern Season staff will be available to discuss the new schedule, new classes and chefs with a meet-and-greet and a sampling of goodies from the upcoming schedule.

**WHEN:** 4-6 p.m. July 1

**WHERE:** Southern Season, 730 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant.

**PRICE:** Free

**MORE INFO:** 416-1240 or [www.southernseason.com/events](http://www.southernseason.com/events)

#### Yappy Hour

**WHAT:** Bay Street Biergarten will host a Yappy Hour to benefit the Charleston Animal Society. Dogs are welcome on the patio and there will be happy hour food and appetizer specials.

**WHEN:** 4-7 p.m. July 1

**WHERE:** Bay Street Biergarten, 549 East Bay St., downtown Charleston

**MORE INFO:** 266-2437 or [www.baystreetbiergarten.com](http://www.baystreetbiergarten.com)

### Thursday

#### Islander Anniversary

**WHAT:** The Islander on Daniel Island will celebrate its first anniversary with complimentary hors d'oeuvres, a pig pickin', kids' food station, dessert station and more, with live music and drink specials, including the launch of its new cocktail, "The Islander." There will also be games, contests, raffles and a treasure hunt for the kids.

**WHEN:** 4-8 p.m. July 2

**WHERE:** The Islander, 160 Fairchild Street, Daniel Island

**PRICE:** Free

**MORE INFO:** 388-6366 or [www.hollycityhospitality.com/the-islander](http://www.hollycityhospitality.com/the-islander)

#### Thursdays Uncorked

**WHAT:** This week's Thursdays Uncorked sampling theme is "Brews, Ciders and Wine." Join in a celebration of Independence Day with a selection of Southern Season's favorite beer, cider and wines and food pairings focused on Americana cuisine.

**WHEN:** 4-30 p.m. July 2

**WHERE:** Southern Season, 730 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant

**PRICE:** \$15

**MORE INFO:** 416-1240 or [www.southernseason.com/events](http://www.southernseason.com/events)

### Saturday

#### 4th of July Celebration

**WHAT:** Southern Season will host its Fourth of July Celebration with hot dogs, beer vendors with samples, face painting and games for the kids, an ice cream cone giveaway, and picnic items available in the deli and to go. A watermelon-eating contest will begin at noon.

**WHEN:** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. July 4

**WHERE:** Southern Season, 730 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant

**PRICE:** Free

**MORE INFO:** 416-1240 or [www.southernseason.com/events](http://www.southernseason.com/events)

### Monday

#### Volunteer Appreciation

**WHAT:** Become a cooking school volunteer and learn cooking techniques and earn credit for classes. Snacks will be served and quarterly volunteers will be scheduled. Sign up by emailing Nicole Marriner at [nmarriner@southernseason.com](mailto:nmarriner@southernseason.com).

**WHEN:** 5 p.m. July 6

**WHERE:** Southern Season, 730 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant

**PRICE:** Free

**MORE INFO:** 416-1240 or [www.southernseason.com/events](http://www.southernseason.com/events)

### Tuesday

#### Barbecue and Blues

**WHAT:** This hands-on cooking class will feature grilled meats and the menu will include baby back ribs with blueberry BBQ sauce, spiced pulled pork with blue cheese coleslaw, blueberry sweet potato short-cakes and more.

**WHEN:** 5 p.m. July 7

**WHERE:** Southern Season, 730 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant

**PRICE:** \$50

**MORE INFO:** 416-1240 or [www.southernseason.com/events](http://www.southernseason.com/events)

### Wednesday, July 8

#### Food for Life

**WHAT:** Food for Life: How Foods Fight Cancer. Learn what to eat and how to cook to help prevent or survive cancer and other chronic conditions in this two-part series.

**WHEN:** Noon-1:30 p.m. July 8, 15

**WHERE:** Board Room, 1st Floor, Roper St. Francis Cancer Center, 2085 Henry Tecklenburg Drive, Charleston

**PRICE:** \$10

**MORE INFO:** 402-CARE (2273)

Post events online at [www.postandcourier.com/events](http://www.postandcourier.com/events).

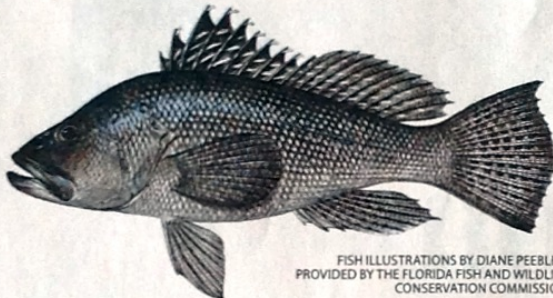
# Fresh take

The in-season ingredient you should be eating now



BRAD NETTLES/STAFF

Mike Lata of The Ordinary uses steam for this black sea bass dish.



FISH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DIANE PEEBLES, PROVIDED BY THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Black sea bass

BY HANNA RASKIN  
[hraskin@postandcourier.com](mailto:hraskin@postandcourier.com)

Folks working to restore the health of oceans and the fish populations that call them home are understandably wary of fetishizing any single species. The prevailing American fervor for tuna, salmon and shrimp, 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 mild-fleshed fish, prized for its firm-yet-delicate texture, is one of many fish now sanctioned for harvesting. It's already popular with sporting types — recreational fishermen in 2013 captured more than 2 million pounds of black sea bass — but the fish hasn't yet attained the name recognition of wreckfish. Here, seven reasons why that situation ought to change:

**1.** The black sea bass, a member of the grouper family, isn't always black. Smaller specimens are dusky brown with light-colored bellies. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "dominant males turn bright blue and have a blue hump on their heads" during spawning season.

**2.** Like most fish found on the end of leisure lines, the black sea bass goes by many different names. The fish is also known as a black will, chub, pin-bass, old humpback, rock bass, Atlantic sea bass and tallywag. It's sometimes confused with black drum.

**3.** Black sea bass is low in fat and high in magnesium. It's also a rich source of protein, with each 100-gram serving providing about 18 grams of protein.

**4.** When shopping for black sea bass, seek out white, translucent flesh, bright eyes and pink gills. Some fans of the fish believe hooked black sea bass is tastier than trapped black sea bass (trawling was banned in the South Atlantic in 1989.) But no matter how the fish was harvested, it can be substituted for snapper in most recipes.

**5.** In 2005, the federal government began imposing catch limits on the southern black sea bass fishery, which stretches from Cape Hatteras to the Florida Keys. Eight years later, the overfished stock was declared successfully rebuilt. "People are seeing more black sea bass than they have since the 1970s," NOAA's South Atlantic Branch chief was quoted as saying in a release announcing the achievement.

**6.** For reasons that still confound scientists, black sea bass begin their lives as females and become males as they grow. Black sea bass top out at around nine pounds, making them puny compared to their Pacific cousins: Giant sea bass, which can live for 75 years, typically weigh about 50 pounds, but unsuspecting fishermen have landed massive examples of the species. The world record belongs to a Californian who caught a 563-pound sea bass.

**7.** Federal law allows recreational fishermen to take up to 15 black sea bass, although a few states along the fish's migration route impose more stringent limits. In Massachusetts, the limit is eight, which an allegedly drunken boater far exceeded earlier this season. Massachusetts Environmental Police in May charged a man who had stashed 122 black sea bass in his coolers; the illicit fish were donated to charity.

## 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) showcases 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

¼ cup pine nuts  
1 pint cherry tomatoes  
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided  
Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper  
1 small shallot, minced  
2 to 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
1 teaspoon sherry vinegar  
4 (6-ounce) fillets black bass, skin on  
2 sprigs mint, leaves sliced into thin ribbons  
2 sprigs basil, leaves sliced into thin ribbons  
4 sprigs thyme

#### Directions

Preheat broiler to high and position an oven rack about 4 inches below the heat. Add pine nuts to a large skillet. Place over medium-low heat and toast, stirring occasionally, until golden brown. Keep an eye on the pan, as pine nuts can burn easily. Remove pine nuts to a small bowl and reserve; allow skillet to cool.

In a medium bowl, toss cherry tomatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season with salt and a few turns of freshly cracked pepper. Pour 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 tablespoon 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.

Stir in sherry vinegar and the blistered tomatoes, including any juices 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 season both sides with salt. Rest an 8-inch steamer 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. Place a piece of parchment paper inside the steamer and place fillets, skin side down, directly onto the parchment. Lay a sprig of thyme on top of each fillet and drizzle with remaining olive oil.

Cover the steamer basket and place skillet 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 a toothpick can be easily inserted into the center of a fillet without resistance.

To serve, lay a piece of black bass in the center of the plate and spoon the blistered cherry tomato sauce around. Garnish with remaining mint and basil and toasted pine nuts. Serve with a side of steamed rice or roasted potatoes.