

CHEFS AT HOME

Steaming Up to Summer

A fragrant dish of fish and rice, from a pioneer of Northwest cooking

By JOYCE GEMPERLEIN



Stephanie Cristalli

THE CHEF: Tom Douglas is the original executive chef and co-owner (with his wife, Jackie Cross) of five Seattle restaurants, including the Dahlia Lounge, a swank showcase for Northwestern cuisine; Etta's Seafood, serving fish in a casual atmosphere; and Serious Pie, a wood-fire pizza restaurant. Mr. Douglas won a regional James Beard Award for best chef in 1994. Recipes here are adapted from "Tom Douglas' Seattle Kitchen" (Morrow/HarperCollins, 2001).

KNOWN FOR: Mr. Douglas has taken a leading role in defining the Northwest and Pacific Rim cooking style. He is recognized both for his respect for the global cuisines that make up the Seattle melting pot and for his addiction to crabmeat.

THE MEAL: Any type of salmon or firm-fleshed fish such as halibut can be substituted in this recipe, Mr. Douglas says. Lemongrass and ginger perfume the rice and flavor the fish and the sauce, an Asian riff on classical French *beurre blanc*. An excellent accompaniment is steamed baby bok choy tossed in garlic oil and a splash of soy sauce.

KITCHEN TIP: Steamed sockeye salmon, with medium fat content and firm flesh, goes well with the lush sauce in this recipe. Grilled salmon, in contrast, demands fruit or vegetable relish or a salad dressed with citrus vinaigrette.

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Sake-Steamed Sockeye Salmon With Sake Butter



Dylan Cross (photographer); Sunny Nam (food stylist); Lauren Anne Niles (prop stylist)

Yield: 4 servings

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

For the Fish:

1 stalk lemongrass, split lengthwise

2 cups sake

2 cups water

10 1/8-inch-thick, coin-shaped slices fresh

unpeeled ginger, smashed with the side of a knife

2 star anise

Peel of 1 scrubbed orange

4 (6-ounce each) skinless sockeye-salmon fillets, preferably center-cut

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 lime, cut into 4 wedges

For the Sauce:

2 tablespoons peeled and julienned fresh ginger

1 tablespoon minced shallots

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon cold unsalted butter, divided, cut into large dice

½ cup plus 1 teaspoon high-quality dry sake (preferably Momokawa Silver, available at www.sakeone.com)

1 tablespoon heavy cream

½ teaspoon fresh lime juice

Salt

• Set up a steamer. Use a large saucepan or a wok with a Chinese bamboo steamer set over it. (If using a metal steamer, lightly grease the steaming basket.)

• Bruise the lemongrass with the back of a knife to help release the aromatics. Cut lemongrass in half crosswise. Place the lemongrass, sake, water, ginger, star anise and orange peel in the bottom of the steamer. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat.

• Meanwhile, to make the sauce, in a small saucepan over medium heat, sweat the ginger and shallots in 1 tablespoon butter for 2 to 3 minutes. Add 1/2 cup of the high-quality sake, bring to a boil over medium-high heat and reduce by two-thirds, about 3 minutes. Add the heavy cream, bring to a boil and reduce by half, about 2 minutes. Add the pieces of cold butter, bit by bit, whisking constantly. The butter will emulsify, creating a thick, creamy sauce. Whisk in the last 2 to 3 pieces of butter with the pan off the heat. (The sauce

PAIRINGS

Wall Street Journal wine columnists Dorothy J. Gaiter and John Brecher suggest wine pairings for this meal.

With the salmon, Chef Douglas suggests what he calls "a classic Oregon Pinot Gris," and since we just finished a major tasting of American Pinot Gris, we're ready with some suggestions. Pinot Gris is the same grape as Italy's Pinot Grigio, but in Oregon it generally makes a very different wine, with more body and underlying minerals. The wines tend to have melon-like fruit but a firm backbone that makes them quite different from sunny, gulpable, simple Italian Pinot Grigio. While more and more California wineries are also making Pinot Gris (and sometimes calling it Pinot Grigio), there is indeed something notable about the examples from Oregon, where it's a specialty. Some names to look for are Bethel Heights Vineyard, Cooper Mountain Vineyards, Elk Cove Vineyards and Wine by Joe. Prices range from about \$12 to \$18. And don't forget that Oregon's excellent Pinot Noir also matches well with many preparations of salmon. That's the pairing that, for us, helped blow away the old myth about "white wine with fish and red wine with steak." Our email address is wine@wsj.com.

will be very thick but will loosen up once the remaining liquids are added.) When all the butter has been incorporated, whisk in the remaining sake and the lime juice. Season to taste with salt. Cover and leave in a warm spot but off the heat.

- Season both sides of the salmon fillets generously with salt and pepper. Lay the salmon fillets (skinned-side down) in the steamer basket. If the fillets include the thinner flaps by the belly area or the tail, fold the thin pieces under so the pieces are about the same thickness. Cover with the lid. Steam until the salmon is just cooked through, about 4 minutes.
- Place a fillet on each of 4 plates. Spoon some sake butter over each portion. Garnish with a lime wedge.

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Aromatic Steamed Rice



Getty Images

Yield: About 5 cups

Preparation: 5 minutes

Cooking: 25 to 30 minutes

2 cups Japanese short-grain rice
1 stalk lemongrass
2 cups cold water
3 1/8-inch-thick coins of unpeeled fresh ginger, smashed with the side of a knife
3 star anise
Zest from 1 scrubbed orange (preferably large, wide strips cut with a vegetable peeler)

- Place raw rice in a fine-mesh strainer. Rinse under cold running water until water runs clear. Drain well.
 - Smash the lemongrass stalk with the back of a knife; slice it thinly crosswise. Wrap it in a small piece of cheesecloth and tie in a bundle with kitchen twine.
- In a medium pot, combine the rice and water. Add the cheesecloth bundle to the pot, scatter the ginger, star anise, and zest over the top and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat, cover the pot and simmer gently until all the water is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave covered for 5 to 10 minutes. Remove the lemongrass and other aromatics, fluff the rice with a fork and serve hot.

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