

In 20 minutes, you can have summer on the plate with fish

By Melissa D'arabian

Grilled fish is the official dish of summer around our house. There is nothing I love to eat more in warm weather than a piece of fresh seasonal fish cooked on the grill - the slightly sweet flesh offset by a tiny bit of char.

You can use some fish from your freezer stash in a pinch, but ask at the fish counter what is seasonal and freshest, and you won't regret the few extra dollars you'll pay. I used Alaskan halibut for today's recipe, but any firm white-fleshed fish will work great. (Skip the flaky thin fish like Dover sole for indoor cooking, or use a special fine-meshed metal grate.)

Halibut is mild, tender and sweet, and it's a fantastic lean source of protein. A 4-ounce serving has 24 grams of protein, a little over 2 grams of fat, and offers a nice showing of B vitamins and minerals, all for 120 calories.

My go-to strategy for grilling mild white fish is to keep it super simple on the actual grill, and then top it with a quick sauce made from a few ingredients. Pat the fish dry gently, and toss on the grill with just a little salt, pepper and olive oil.

Once the fish is cooked, I top it straight from the grill with the sauce. While the fish is cooking, whip up a sauce with a little acid (like lemon or vinegar), aromatics (like minced garlic, shallot or green onion), herbs, and a tiny touch of fat (like olive oil or butter). Pouring it on while the fish is hot makes the simple flavors come alive like Hugh Jackman playing PT Barnum.

Grilled Halibut with Butter Caper Herb Sauce is an excellent starting point for mastering this easy fish-grilling blueprint that you'll use both on weekends and busy weeknight meals. In under 20 minutes, you can have summer on the plate.



Grilled Halibut with Butter Caper Herb Sauce

Ingredients

Servings: 6
Start to finish: 20 minutes
1 3/4 pounds of fresh Alaskan halibut fillet (or other firm white-flesh fish), checked for bones
1/2 lemon, for squeezing
2 teaspoons olive oil
Salt and pepper

Sauce

2 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, minced

2 tablespoons capers, plus a little of the juice
2 tablespoons lemon juice
A handful of chopped tender herbs, like basil, parsley, or cilantro

Preparation

Heat a gas or charcoal grill to medium high. Scrub the grill grates with a wire brush or tongs and ball of foil to clean off burnt food debris, and lightly oil the grates. Squeeze a little lemon juice on the halibut and let it sit a few minutes before blotting it dry gently with a paper towel.

Season the fish with a little salt and pepper. Drizzle the olive oil over both sides of the fish, and use your fingers to coat the whole fillet lightly with oil. Once the grill is hot, place the fish

flesh side down on the grill. Allow to cook about 5-6 minutes on the first side. Use a metal spatula to flip the fish to cook the second side, until cooked through but not dry, about 3-4 more minutes. (To help keep the fish from sticking, don't flip it too soon, and flip the fish with a purposeful, quick motion.)

Meanwhile, heat the butter and garlic in a small sauce pan on the stove at medium heat until the garlic is aromatic, about 2 minutes. Add the capers with a little caper liquid and the lemon juice and whisk to combine. Remove from heat, stir the herbs into the sauce and then pour over the fish just as it comes off the grill. Serve.