



BEETROOT, PINK PEPPERCORN & GIN CURED SIDE OF SALMON

Crafted by Clare Heal - Journalist-turned-chef based in London



Sweetly earthy beetroot is the perfect partner for the richness of salmon. This dramatic-looking preparation takes a bit of time but it's pretty much all hands-off so it is a good one to prepare in advance of a gathering. Serve with thinly sliced, thickly buttered brown bread and the optional accompaniments below.

Feeds 4-8

Ingredients:

- 1kg (approx) side of salmon, skin off
- 500g beetroot
- 100g flaky sea salt
- 50g sugar
- 1 tbsp pink peppercorns, crushed
- 100ml gin

Method

1. Lay a double layer of clingfilm over a baking tray with a rim. Leave plenty of overhang. Repeat in the opposite direction, making a cross of clingfilm. Place the salmon in the centre, skin side down.
2. Wash and grate the beetroot (no need to peel). Put it in a bowl and add the salt, sugar, peppercorns and gin.
3. Mix well then spread evenly over the salmon. Wrap tightly in the clingfilm and place another baking tray on top. Weigh it down with a couple of tins and refrigerate for 24-48 hours. The longer you leave it, the deeper the colour and flavour of the beetroot will penetrate into the salmon and the former its flesh will become. After more than 48 hours the fish will begin to dry out a little and get over salty.

4. Remove the clingfilm and discard the beetroot. Be careful and wear an apron! A lot of liquid will have emerged from the beetroot and whilst its vivid purple colour looks delightful on the salmon, you will find it less pleasing on your favourite outfit or all over the kitchen counter.
5. Gently wash the salmon and pat dry with paper towels. Slice thinly to serve or, wrapped tightly, it will keep for a week in the fridge.

Variations

- Add other flavourings to the beetroot. Sub out the pink peppercorns for black or white. Lemon or orange zest are great additions. Choose spices according to your palate. Coriander and fennel are both classic partners for salmon. Caraway goes well with beetroot.
- You can leave the beetroot out altogether and just use a mixture of salt, sugar and spices.

QUICK-PICKLED CUCUMBER RIBBONS

Ingredients

- 1 cucumber
- 100ml white wine or cider vinegar
- 50g sugar
- 1 tsp salt

Method

1. Use a vegetable peeler or mandoline to slice the cucumber into ribbons and put them in a bowl.
2. In a small pan heat the vinegar, sugar and salt with 100ml water until the sugar and salt have dissolved then pour over the cucumber ribbons. Leave for 10 minutes before draining. Serve with the salmon.

HORSERADISH CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Ingredients

- 1 small tub crème fraîche
- Horseradish (fresh or jarred)
- Black pepper

Method

1. Put the crème fraîche in a bowl and add the horseradish and pepper to taste. If you're grating fresh horseradish, bear in mind that the flavour will become more pronounced the longer it stands before serving.