

Pan-Seared Sea Bass

Serves 2

If purchasing whole black sea bass, ask that the fish be scaled and filleted. Be sure to pat the fish dry before coating it with the oil so it doesn't stick to the pan. Along those same lines, a hot pan is key to getting a really crispy skin.

2 (6-7 ounce) sea bass fillets, skin scaled, but left on

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon canola oil, plus more for rubbing fish

Remove any bones from the fillets with tweezers. Place the fillets, flesh side down, and cut three slits, just through the skin, on each one. Pat dry with paper towels and lightly rub canola oil on both sides. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat the canola oil in a heavy-bottomed pan until hot, but not smoking. Add the fish, skin side down. The fish will immediately appear to seize up. When this happens, gently press the fish flat with a spatula for a few seconds. Release and let it continue to cook until about 70% done (cook time varies depending on the size and thickness of the fillet). Flip the fish and cook the other side until done. Remove from the pan and serve immediately over the black lentils.

Black Lentils

Serves 4

Any lentil can replace the black lentils in this recipe, but black lentils (also known as caviar lentils) are particularly elegant. Holding their shape during cooking and glistening under the pan-seared sea bass, they make this quick and easy dish quite a showstopper.

1 cup black lentils, picked over and rinsed

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small celery stalk, finely chopped

1 small carrot, peeled and finely chopped

1 medium shallot, minced

1 garlic clove, minced

½ cup dry vermouth

3 ½ cups hot water

½ bay leaf

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil. Stir in the

This recipe came from *Minced* at www.mincedblog.com.

celery, carrot, and shallot. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are soft about 4 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the lentils and stir to combine.

Add the vermouth and cook, stirring constantly, until almost completely evaporated. Pour in the hot water and add the bay leaf. Bring to a simmer. Partially cover the saucepan and simmer for 30 to 35 minutes or until tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve as desired; lentils are delicious as a side dish or as a hearty main course.