

quality on line

The waters of the tropics have an abundance of healthy, fresh produce

{ words Craig Squire
{ photography Veronica Sagredo

In our pristine waters of North Queensland there is an abundance of seafood. Fished and brought to you by local family businesses, these people take their responsibility for sustainable fisheries seriously. It's their future.

Working in tandem with their peak body – Queensland Seafood Industry Association, they adhere to an Environmental Management System, ensuring the best seafood will always be available for future generations. This system is audited annually by both the DPI in Queensland and the national Department of Environment

Buying local seafood ensures your money stays in the local economy and will add to your health and wellbeing.

There is strong and tangible evidence eating oily fish, of which we have several varieties locally, will provide a rich source of protein and fatty acids, omega-3.

A myriad of global studies link good consumption of omega-3 to a 50 per cent reduction in heart disease, reduced rates of stroke and depression, asthma control and reducing stress. Consumption of these fish by pregnant women increases the future child's IQ and by children themselves can increase concentration and brain development. Obviously with a low calorie value, eating fish will provide a low-fat diet.

Mothers should not fear the innuendo created by an outdated study that eating fish will build up mercury in the foetus. There is new and compounding evidence that this has little effect with a balanced diet, eating a variety of fish up to three times a week and especially fish caught in pristine waters like ours.

Another great benefit of eating locally caught fish and seafood is its low carbon footprint. There would have been no long-distance air freight or travel. No irrigation is needed to grow the feed, no fuel used to transport and process the feed and no greenhouse gases (methane) emitted by the product itself.

In our region we have good retailers who make this local fish conveniently available fresh or frozen. It is a retail requirement that fishmongers display the origin of their product, something I wish could be introduced into food service as there are many restaurants using imported product that undermines the industry's credibility and is not providing the experience our visitors or you desire. Two species that are readily available almost year-round are yellow fin tuna and spanish mackerel – both are high in omega-3 and easy to cook.

They can be easily barbecued or pan fried. Here are two recipes I have cooked many times in the restaurant, for off-site catering or at home.



Craig Squire is the chef and director of Ochre Restaurant and Catering. View his recipes at www.ochrerestaurant.com.au/recipe.html

Blackened tuna with tomato, cucumber and avocado salsa with lemon myrtle crème fraiche

Serves 4

Recipe

4 x 200gm fresh yellow fin tuna steaks (2cm thick)
100gm blackening (cajun spice)
40ml Australian olive oil
40gm butter

Salsa

1 x ripe tomato
1/2 continental cucumber
1/2 Spanish onion
1 x large avocado
10gm coriander leaf
50ml white vinegar or lime juice
80ml olive oil
Seasoning

Method

Finely dice all ingredients, add vinegar and oil, season to taste

Lemon myrtle crème fraiche

Combine 150ml crème fraiche with 10gm powdered lemon myrtle

To serve

Heat pan and when hot add oil and butter. Dust both sides of tuna liberally with cajun spice. Put into hot, bubbling pan. Turn over when tuna turns white 1/3 up the side. Cook the same on the other side. Keep pan hot at all times. Serve medium rare. Spread salsa on to plates. Place tuna in centre. Place crème fraiche in quenelles around tuna. Serve and eat immediately.



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JUNE 15

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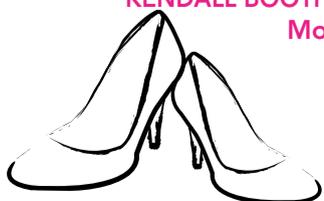
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Yellow coconut curry with mackerel and vegetables

Serves 4

Like all curries, you can vary the ingredients to your personal taste, or add different vegies like sweet potato, bok choy or eggplant. The important things are to make the sauce and get the balance right to your taste. Do this before adding the fish.

Recipe

400 gm Spanish mackerel – 3cm cubes
 1 small onion – diced
 1/2 red capsicum – diced
 100gm button mushrooms – halved
 100gm green beans – cut into 2cm lengths
 80gm yellow curry paste
 20gm fresh ginger – finely sliced
 500ml coconut milk
 150ml water
 1 small bunch fresh coriander or Thai basil or both – rough chopped
 fresh water chestnuts (if in season) or unsalted macadamias
 Sea salt to taste

Method

Sauté onion and curry paste in a little sunflower oil, add all other vegetables and coconut milk, bring to boil and adjust seasoning. This can be done a few hours before meal time and left standing. When you wish to eat, bring sauce to simmer and add the fish and nuts. Gently stir to have fish coated evenly and simmer until fish is just cooked. Serve immediately with rice if desired and garnish with fresh herbs.



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