



AUSTRALIAN
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2017



SEAFOOD MADE SIMPLE *with*

BEN DEVLIN

PAPER DAISY

Pan-roasted blue-eye with watercress and brown butter

Prep time 60 mins, cook 15 mins
(plus chilling, drying)

Serves 4

- 1.4 kg blue-eye trevalla on the bone, or whole goldband snapper (see note)
- 260 ml canola oil
- 2 golden shallots, finely sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 4 sprigs dill
- 4 sprigs lemon thyme
- 200 gm butter, diced
- 200 ml dry white wine
- 160 gm watercress sprigs (about 1 bunch), 12 sprigs reserved to garnish
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp apple balsamic vinegar or balsamic vinegar
- 100 gm salted capers, rinsed and drained

1 A key technique to getting really great skin on a piece of pan-fried fish is to ensure the skin has time to dry out. If possible, leave the fish on the bone with the skin exposed in your fridge overnight before starting. If you have boneless portions of fish, don't leave them as long in the fridge or the flesh will dry out; chill fillets for 4-6 hours skin-side up with the flesh only wrapped in plastic wrap. About two hours before serving, cut fillets from bones to allow enough time to do the job without rushing, but not so much time that the flesh dries out, then cut fillets into evenly thick 160gm portions, reserving 200gm bones. If the fish has been refrigerated after filleting, stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking so it cooks evenly.

2 Cut bones into small pieces using scissors. Heat a saucepan over medium heat with 160ml canola oil. When hot, add fish bones and fry without stirring until golden brown (4-5 minutes; don't worry if they stick to the pan). Turn bones, scraping from pan if necessary, add shallot, half the garlic, 2 sprigs each dill and lemon thyme, and stir occasionally until bones are well coloured (3-4 minutes). Add 100gm butter, and cook until brown and beginning to smell nutty (1-2 minutes). Add wine and reduce by two-thirds (4-6 minutes), then add water to just cover bones (about 500ml) and simmer gently over medium-low heat until reduced by

about half (15-20 minutes). Carefully strain stock through a fine metal sieve into a small clean saucepan (discard solids) and remove fat by placing paper towels on the surface, then discard. Reduce stock over medium heat to a glaze (10-15 minutes) and keep warm.

3 Place watercress, mustard, vinegar, a pinch of salt and 1 tbsp water in a blender jug. Pour 80ml remaining canola oil into a separate container, then place both in the freezer until very cold (about 15 minutes). Blend watercress mixture while slowly adding oil until a smooth sauce forms and set aside.

4 Heat a very large cast-iron frying pan or a heavy non-stick pan over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking (cook fish in batches if your pan isn't large enough). Brush fish generously with remaining canola oil and season, then place fish skin-side down in pan, pressing to ensure all the skin has contact with the pan. Reduce heat to medium and fry without moving fish until golden at the edges (about 3 minutes). Use a thin spatula to pry fish loose, being careful not to tear the skin; it will have stuck just enough to give a good even colour and crispness. Flip fish over, reduce heat to medium-low, then add 50gm remaining butter, and remaining garlic, dill and lemon thyme. Baste fish skin with foaming butter until sides take on a golden colour (1-2 minutes). Add remaining butter and capers, and baste fish with butter until a digital probe thermometer reads 50C at the centre, or a thin metal skewer is inserted without too much resistance, and feels quite warm (not hot) when touched against the inside of your wrist (about 1 minute). Remove from pan, then brush fish stock glaze over flesh; avoid the skin or the crispness will be lost.

5 To serve, spoon watercress sauce onto plates, top with fish, scatter with reserved watercress and capers, and drizzle remaining glaze around fish.

Note Alternatively, use four 160gm skin-on blue-eye trevalla fillets and 200gm trevalla or snapper bones.

MY NOTES