

# How to cook a trout, big or small

By **DAVID CAMPICHE**  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

**D**ennis Battles hadn't fished for trout since he was a kid. But when a neighbor showed off a string of fine rainbow trout, Battles felt his pulse rise.

A little interlude here: Battles loves to cook. He loves to cook more than his doctor likes him to eat, a truth with most of us over 60. Somehow, Battles remains relatively fit. Perhaps, he follows the dictate of the infamous Paul Bocuse, who said, "Without butter, without eggs, there is no reason to come to France."

Battles has a conflict. He has a culinary degree from Le Cordon Bleu Paris and spends a lot of time pleasing friends, family and neighbors with cuisine that amazes and delights.

One can easily imagine, then, how Battles reacted to those lovely lake trout. Rainbows, bright and shimmering with brilliant spectrums of color, mostly silvers and blues and touches of ruby and gold. And tiny organized spots as if God painted each one individually.

You and I might react to this limit of trout and think about getting a fishing license. Battles did that, too, but his strongest motivation was the sauté pan.

A trout is not a salmon, but a close relative to the steelhead or the steelhead trout. On his second day of fishing, the master chef landed, against improbable odds, a trout that weighed 7 pounds. Seven pounds! Praise be.

Generally, we are dealing with a fish 10 to 14 inches long. But the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was generous this spring and released some big ones into Ilwaco's Black Lake.

Trout are especially splendid with lemon, butter and chopped parsley. That holds true for steelhead and salmon, both larger fishes, at least on average.

A small trout, or three or four, are perfect for a 10-inch sauté pan. The trout are cleaned and perhaps beheaded. Battles leaves them whole. Into a pan, he adds the butter and melts it into a hot liquid. He adds a couple tablespoons of virgin olive oil and a small bit (one teaspoon) of chopped garlic. This adds flavor and



David Campiche

**A string of rainbow trout at Black lake in Ilwaco, Wash.**

has less tendency to burn. Once the garlic begins to turn golden, in go the trout. Sauté

each side for about two minutes. Please don't overcook. The flesh is delicate. Add a

## INGREDIENTS

*One large or several smaller  
Rainbow trout  
4 tablespoons of butter or (optional) 2 tablespoons of olive oil with 2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon of chopped garlic  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 tablespoons of lemon juice  
2 tablespoons of chopped parsley or fresh fennel  
Splash of white wine (optional)  
Italian seasons or chopped fresh fennel—follow your bliss.  
Sauvignon Blanc wine is the perfect accompaniment.*

splash of white wine.

Out of the pan and onto the plate. Small yellow potatoes are a favorite accompaniment, and Battles sautéed Chinese beans in curry paste, olive oil and Kosher salt. Over the trout he poured more fresh melted butter with parsley and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. "Voilà," as the French are fond of saying.

But what about that 7-pond trout? This is a trout that believes he or she is a salmon and should be prepared as one. And this means either filleting the bruiser into two lovely sides, or, an easier option, baking the fish whole.

Battles wipes the body with olive oil then distributes lots of cracked salt and pepper. Many of us like the skin crispy, in which case, you might sprinkle the fish with something more exotic like smoked paprika, Cajun dust or Italian herbs. You might go Thai.

Today, for our purposes, the fish is best laid on aluminum foil and baked at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes. Before serving, one has the option of curling back the backbone and leaving two fillets. The same trio of butter, lemon juice and chopped parsley (maybe fresh fennel) finishes off that fish like your mother's loving touch. **CW**