

Smoked salmon crostini

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

Summer can be an elusive concept in the Northwest. Just when I think we're inching toward warmer weather, it becomes February all over again. I know that isn't technically possible, but when the damp air and cold rain make my bones creak, it's February in my heart.

When I moved to Seattle over 20 years ago, some colleagues gifted me a charming plaque. It's a person in a raincoat holding an umbrella to the side and lifting their head joyfully into rain. "Smile at the Rain," it reads. Since then, I've learned to love the cozy rainy weather, although I am ready to start eating outside.

But my Seattle family members are polarized when it comes to al fresco dining. Aimie loves it and Jon would rather experience a root canal than eat outdoors. So, we compromise and eat outside frequently.

Casual dining outdoors is relaxing and allows me to sip a cold drink and visit with family while my 12-year-old nephew operates the grill. Honestly, he's a grilling expert and he doubts my competency ever since the accidental blackened salmon incident.

Whether it's a cook out or a barbecue, the idea of an outdoor feast complete with appetizers makes me happy. It feels memorable in a way the indoor dining doesn't, simply because the season is short and time is precious.

I'm ready to breathe in the fresh air, feel the breeze and hold on tight to my paper napkin, even if I'm in a raincoat and a beanie. Until summer arrives, let's huddle together, enjoy a meal outside and smile at the rain.

Smoked salmon crostini

Makes about 16 to 20 crostini

Since I've been relieved of outdoor grilling duties during family events, I'm usually on appetizer or dessert duty. I'm a fan of crostini because they can be customized. All you need is crispy bread, a simple spread and some toppings.

- One baguette
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus drizzle
- 8 ounces softened cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped dill, plus more for garnish
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest



Brian Medford

Smoked salmon crostini, with capers, dill and onion.

- 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 8 ounces smoked salmon
- Flaky salt and pepper to taste
- Optional toppings: capers, thinly sliced red onion, cucumbers, sliced tomatoes or cornichons.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Slice the baguette into 1/2 inch thick slices. Add the crostini slices onto a baking sheet. Then, brush the baguette slices with the olive oil and sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Bake for six to eight minutes or until golden brown.

To assemble the crostini, mix cream cheese, chopped dill, lemon zest and lemon juice together in a bowl until smooth. Season to taste with flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper. Evenly slather each crostini with the cream cheese mixture, then add the salmon, dill and any other topping you choose. Drizzle with extra virgin olive

oil to finish.

Brian Medford is the owner of Idlewild Biscuits and Bakes in Astoria and delights

in Southern cooking. He is a staff instructor at The Pantry in Seattle. Contact him at blmedford@gmail.com.

SHANGRILA CREEK MINING COMPANY



**CAPTAIN KID
AMUSEMENT PARK**

**GO KARTS
MINI GOLF
GYROXTREME
ROCK WALL
KIDDIE RIDES
MINING SLUICE
AND MORE!**

SEASIDE, OREGON



**SHANGRILA CREEK
MINING COMPANY**

HWY 101 (1/4 mi South of Seaside) • 2735 S. Roosevelt Dr. • 503-738-2076

OPEN DAILY 11AM TO 6PM