



Photos by David Campiche

LEFT: Lush, green carrot tops make a fine seasoning for gremolata. RIGHT: Salmon and cucumbers make up a salad dish beside a ripe watermelon.

Refreshing salmon, cucumber and watermelon

BY DAVID CAMPICHE

The sun has crept out in full force. Inland, the landscape cooks, temperatures leapfrogging over past records. Along Washington's ocean beaches, mist hangs over the seascape. To catch a salmon, we fish deep, arriving home recently with several beautiful cohos and one fair-sized king, a feast in mind.

After filleting the salmon, I cut the fish into 2-inch-wide strips. I rubbed the fil-

let first with olive oil and then sprinkled it with salt and sugar, coating the top side of the flesh liberally, skin in place on the back side. I placed all into a shallow bowl, then poured 1/4 cup of white wine over the fish, finishing the process with chopped fennel, fresh from the garden.

I placed the fillets on an oiled baking sheet and cooked them for about 5 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit. When beads of fat congeal and turn white, the salmon is

ready. For a hot summer day, Laurie and I decided to pair the salmon with a refreshing salad of watermelon and cucumbers.

Salmon, cucumber and watermelon salad

Ingredients

- Two medium-sized cucumbers, sliced into thin rounds
- 1 cup Japanese rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup of water
- 2/3 cup of granulated sugar
- 2 cups of watermelon, cubed and thinly sliced

Preparation

Add granulated sugar to vinegar and water to dissolve it. Slice cucumbers into 1/8-inch pieces and add. Top with watermelon and refrigerate until cold.

My neighbor shared a dozen small carrots. These I cleaned and boiled in water until tender and then drained. In 1 tablespoon each of half butter and olive oil, I sauteed the carrots for a couple of minutes and added a tablespoon of honey, 1/4 cup white wine and a 1/4 teaspoon of ground cilantro and sauteed until the liquid nearly evaporated. I finished the dish with a lovely gremolata with carrot tops from the garden.

Gremolata

Ingredients

- 12 small carrot tops, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon curry paste, married with 1 tablespoon warm water
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 1/2 jalapeno pepper, minced
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest, finely grated
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

In a 10-inch nonstick pan, combine cilantro, lemon zest, jalapeno and carrot tops. Briefly saute in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil until soft and flavorful.

Sprinkle gremolata over carrots and serve with the salmon, cucumber and watermelon salad, preferably outdoors. The sun arrived for us in the late afternoon and the ocean air smelled salty and clean. A dry white wine heightened the repast.

David Campiche is a potter, poet, writer and lifelong resident of the Long Beach Peninsula with a keen interest in adventure, fine and culinary arts. Find more about his work at davidcampiche.com.

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