

COOKING WITH HORSERADISH

An underappreciated root with bold kick

By **SARA MOULTON**
Associated Press

Horseradish — a member of the mustard family native to Eastern and Central Europe — has been enjoyed by people since antiquity. Even so, when Peter Kump, one of my mentors, wrote in praise of the root in 1992, he argued well that horseradish remained vastly underappreciated.

Sure, we know it as a key ingredient of cocktail sauces and as one of the five bitter herbs served at a Passover seder. But fewer people know it for how well it complements roasted meats, poultry and fish, he said.

If anything, Peter may have understated its usefulness. Food historian Waverly Root wrote that some ancient populations ate copious amounts of horseradish in winter for its warming qualities and that Roman philosophers recommended horseradish to treat all manner of ailments. Modern chefs have always loved horseradish, but now, increasingly, you can find it in the produce section of the supermarket, making it easy to add it to your home culinary tool kit.

So let’s talk about two kinds of horseradish: fresh and homemade prepared. In search of fresh horseradish at the supermarket, look for a firm, off-white root with no soft spots or cuts. Peeled, it should appear smooth and white inside. Potent as horseradish can be, sometimes just a hint of it



AP Photo/J.M. Hirsch

Petite steaks topped with a homemade prepared horseradish crust.

is enough. In that case, peel and grate the fresh vegetable on top of your finished dish right before serving. Raw, it’s almost sweet.

But if you want to make your own prepared horseradish — similar to what you’d buy jarred at the grocer — a fierce batch that will last for several weeks in the fridge, you’ll need to start with quite a bit of freshly grated horseradish. If you try to do the job with a hand-grater, you’ll be sawing away for hours. Here’s a much faster and easier way; cut the root into 1-inch chunks and grind them in a food processor.

However — and please pay attention here — once you’ve ground the root, you must treat it like a dangerous gas. Horseradish

contains strong and volatile oils that are released when it is chopped or crushed. That’s why you need to stand at arm’s length from the processor as you remove the lid, then keep your distance for a few minutes before spooning it out of the processor. If you don’t keep your distance, at least initially, you’ll tear up worse than if you’d just chopped a bushel of onions.

Oddly enough, 10 minutes later all the wind has gone out of this storm. The horseradish becomes quite mild, even boring. What do you do to preserve horseradish’s trademark heat? Add vinegar, and do it quickly, before the flavor starts to fade. Your homemade condiment will taste sharper and cleaner

than the stuff in the bottle and can be used in any dish to which you used to add the bottled stuff.

Here, I’ve combined our prepared horseradish with mayonnaise and mustard to form a super-tangy glue for the crumbs adorning some steaks. It would be equally wonderful with fish. For that matter, it’ll add a nice kick to just about any spring dish you can name.

Sara Moulton is the host of public television’s “Sara’s Weeknight Meals.” She was executive chef at Gourmet magazine for nearly 25 years and spent a decade hosting several Food Network shows, including “Cooking Live.” Her latest cookbook is “Home Cooking 101.”

HOMEMADE PREPARED HORSERADISH

Start to finish: 5 minutes
Makes about 1/2 cup

- 2-ounce piece peeled fresh horseradish, cut into 1-inch chunks
 - 2 1/2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
 - 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- In a food processor, process the horseradish until it is very finely chopped. Keeping your eyes averted when you remove the lid from the food processor, transfer the horseradish to a bowl and stir in the vinegar and salt. Let stand for 10 minutes before using.

PETITE STEAKS WITH HOMEMADE PREPARED HORSERADISH CRUST

Start to finish: 45 minutes
Servings: 4

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup finely crushed potato chips
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons prepared fresh horseradish (recipe above)
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 pounds petite fillet or flat-iron steaks or boneless short ribs, cut crosswise into 1-inch thick pieces

Heat the oven to broil.

In a large, oven-safe skillet over medium, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil. Add the garlic and rosemary and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Stir in the breadcrumbs and cook, stirring, until they have turned slightly golden, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, then add the potato chips and stir well. Set aside. Wipe out the skillet.

In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, horseradish and mustard, then season with salt and pepper.

Heat the remaining oil in the skillet over high heat. Season the steaks on both sides with salt and pepper, then sear for 1 minute per side.

Working quickly, spread the horseradish mixture generously on one side of each steak, then top the mixture with the breadcrumb mixture, pressing it down gently. Transfer the skillet to the oven’s middle shelf and broil until the crumbs are lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Divide the steaks among serving plates, along with any juices from the skillet. Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: 560 calories; 370 calories from fat (66 percent of total calories); 41 g fat (10 g saturated; 0.5 g trans fats); 120 mg cholesterol; 460 mg sodium; 13 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 1 g sugar; 34 g protein.



Black River Outdoors Center via AP

This undated photo provided by Black River Outdoors Center shows kayakers entering a cypress swamp on the Waccamaw River in South Carolina. Kayak trips through the swamp offer quiet natural surroundings and a tranquil contrast to busy nearby Myrtle Beach.

Just a few miles from busy Myrtle Beach, a quiet kayak trip

By **BETH J. HARPAZ**
AP Travel Editor

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Condo towers with ocean views. King Kong hanging off a mini-Empire State Building. A zipline, escape room and helicopter rides.

Myrtle Beach is all of this and more. But just a few miles from the city’s busy boardwalk and roadside attractions, a different type of thrill awaits.

Here, the Waccamaw River meanders through a cypress swamp in a wildlife refuge. Spanish moss drapes the trees, turtles sun themselves on stones and spider lily plants bloom with bright white flowers.

Spend a few hours kayaking the calm waters and who knows what you might encounter. A dragonfly could land on your arm. A water snake could slither by. A bright yellow bird might pierce the quiet with a loud call as it flits from tree to tree, but good luck pronouncing its name: prothonotary warbler.

Duck your head if a low-hanging branch comes up too fast to paddle around, and move to the side if the modern



Black River Outdoors Center via AP

This undated photo provided by Black River Outdoors Center shows a dragonfly landing on the hand of a kayaker in the Waccamaw River in South Carolina.

world intrudes: Motorboats turn up on the waterway too.

I did a two-hour kayak trip here with a group of friends, booking through the Black River Outdoors Center. Our guide, Mandy Johnson, was brilliant at spotting wildlife and generous with her knowledge. And her love of the natural world was infectious: We smiled as she picked a flailing white moth out of the water and let it cling to her hat until its wings dried.

The kayak outing was one of many excursions I took on a five-day getaway to the

Myrtle Beach area. But while I enjoyed the destination’s other pleasures — including brunch at the Tupelo Honey restaurant and a visit to Fat Harold’s, a North Myrtle Beach club famous for the swing dance known as the Carolina shag — the kayak trip stands apart.

See, exciting activities are easy to come by in a place like Myrtle Beach — not to mention restaurants, bars, fireworks and shopping. What’s harder to find is tranquility. But there it was, in a kayak.

A summer spin on the grilled cheese sandwich

By **KATIE WORKMAN**
Associated Press

Several weeks ago when we rolled out the grill for the first time of the season, there was much joy. What to grill first? Ribs? Burgers? Pizza? So many choices.

This is the sandwich that triumphed: A marriage of a summer BLT and an actually grilled-grilled-cheese sandwich. The buttery crunch of the bread, the juicy tomatoes, the melty cheese, the crisp bacon and lettuce — these two sandwiches were meant to find each other

and become one.

You can use iceberg lettuce if you want more of a crunch, and you can experiment with various types of cheese and bacon or pancetta. User your imagination, and this recipe will make this the summer of grilled cheese.

Katie Workman has written two cookbooks focused on easy, family-friendly cooking, “Dinner Solved!” and “The Mom 100 Cookbook.” She blogs at <http://www.themom100.com/about-katie-workman/>



AP Photo/Katie Workman

THE ULTIMATE GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 4

- 8 slices sourdough bread
- 4 teaspoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/3 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese (or choose your favorite cheese)
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 8 strips cooked bacon or pancetta
- 8 large pieces romaine lettuce or iceberg for more crunch
- 3 plum tomatoes, sliced
- Kosher or coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat the grill to medium low.

Butter one side of each of the pieces of bread. Evenly divide the cheese between 4 slices of the bread, on the un-buttered sides. Place all of the bread, buttered side down, on the grill and cover the grill. Grill the bread until the bottom is lightly marked with grill marks and the cheese is melted. You may need to remove the plain pieces of bread first, and move the cheese covered pieces to the top grill rack and cover the grill for a couple of extra minutes, so that the cheese melts but the bottoms of the bread slices don’t burn.

Spread the mayonnaise evenly over the unbuttered sides of the 4 pieces of plain toast. On the melted cheese slices, layer the bacon, lettuce and tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper. Place the mayonnaise spread slices mayo-side down on the sandwiches, slice, and eat warm.

Nutrition information per serving: 1042 calories; 270 calories from fat; 30 g fat (13 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 54 mg cholesterol; 2169 mg sodium; 150 g carbohydrate; 8 g fiber; 15 g sugar; 43 g protein.