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SLOW FOOD FAST: SATISFYING AND SEASONAL FOOD IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES

Olive Oil-Poached Cod With Cauliflower Couscous



The Chef:
Mike Wiley

COD HAS A MILD, firm flesh that lends itself to a wide range of preparations. But Maine chef Mike Wiley is especially partial to poaching the fillets in olive oil. “The green, grassy oil perfumes the fish,” he said, “and the texture this technique

achieves is remarkably luscious and light.”

It’s a gentle way of cooking, low and slow. “If your fillets are small you can even turn off the heat after adding them,” Mr. Wiley said. “Then watch, because they’ll be done in under 10 minutes.”

You’ll know the fish is overcooking if you see foamy white albumin, a protein, seeping out of the fillets—a sure sign it’s time to lift them out of the pot.

Here Mr. Wiley serves the cod on a bed of “couscous” made by pulsing blanched cauliflower in a food processor—“a great option for gluten-free guests,” he said. Tossed with a lemony dressing and plenty of mint and chives, it makes a bright, herbal counterpoint to the sumptuous fish. —*Kitty Greenwald*

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes **SERVES:** 4

Kosher salt

½ large head cauliflower,
separated into florets

1¼ tablespoon sesame
seeds, toasted

1 teaspoon smoked
paprika

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 large garlic clove,
minced

4¼ cups olive oil

4 (4-ounce) cod fillets

Leaves from 7 sprigs
mint, roughly torn
10 chives, minced

1. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add cauliflower and boil until beginning to soften but still resistant when pierced, about 3 minutes. Strain cauliflower and toss dry. In a food processor, pulse cauliflower until it resembles fluffy couscous.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together sesame seeds, paprika, lemon zest, half the juice, garlic and ¼ cup olive oil. Season with salt to taste and adjust other seasonings as needed. Fold in cauliflower couscous until evenly dressed. Add more salt, oil or lemon to taste.

3. Season cod liberally on both sides with salt.

Pour remaining olive oil into a medium heavy pot over low heat. Once hot but not bubbling, or at 135 degrees, slide in cod fillets and make sure they are just covered in oil, working in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding. Gently poach cod, keeping temperature steady, until it offers no resistance when pierced, about 6 minutes. If white albumin leeches out, immediately and gently lift fish out with a fish spatula. Blot cod dry on paper towels.

4. Toss chives and mint into couscous. To serve, distribute couscous among 4 plates and place one cod fillet over each helping.

His restaurants:
Hugo's, Eventide
Oyster Co. and
the Honey Paw, all
in Portland, Maine

**What he's
known for:**
Injecting whimsy
and creativity
into New
England seafood.
Anchoring
Portland's emerging
dining scene.



LINDA XIAO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FOOD STYLING BY HEATHER MELDROM, PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART

HEAD GAMES Pulsing cooked cauliflower in a food processor produces tender grains that make a delicious, gluten-free alternative to couscous.