

EAT WHAT YOU CAN CATCH

A Fisherman's Cookbook & Sustainability Guide

By Eliot Fisher



Foreword

My love of food in general was inspired by my mother. Going out to restaurants was ruined by her own cooking, which was always so much better at home, no matter what the dish. The way she uses different spices together isn't something that can be taught. My mom is from Bucaramanga, a city high up in the Colombian mountains. She was the oldest of three daughters and she had to take on the role of house cook. Her specialty Colombian dishes are my favorites—tamales, empanadas, arepas, ajiaco, yucca, platanos, chicharron—and the most impressive part of all these dishes is that she makes them from memory. All she needs is an ingredient list and she can make the magic happen.

Unfortunately for you all, the readers, I am nowhere near as talented as my mother, but I did inherit her sense of liberalism and open interpretation when referring to recipes. Often ingredients can be substituted or totally ignored. I hope you take these recipes as more of a list of ingredients and less of a step-by-step hand-holding cookbook. Get creative, use what you have, and most importantly of all: ***Don't be afraid to use salt.*** It might not turn out as perfect as you had hoped the first time but make it again and it'll just keep getting better.



*Summer flounder "fluke" (*Paralichthys dentatus*) – Limited out on my favorite fish, the flatties.*

Introduction: I Know How to Fish

As a graduate student in environmental policy and management, I spend a lot of time thinking about big systems: fisheries regulation, habitat loss, the politics of conservation. But a lot of what I know about those things, I didn't learn in a classroom. A lot of the knowledge I have was built directly on the water—on the east end of Long Island where I grew up spending summers, and more recently here on the Monterey coast. Fishing, it turns out, is one of the fastest ways to understand what's actually going on in an ecosystem. The fish tell you. Or more often, the absence of fish tells you.

I want to be honest about what kind of fisherman I am. I know how to fish. I know how to tie the rigs, read the water, and set up a line. What I've always been missing is timing, and the local knowledge that only comes from years in one place, or from talking to the right people. Some of my best fishing spots have come from striking up random conversations. The best porgy hole I've ever found came from "the old man of the sea"—a grandpa-looking guy in an old pickup truck, with a black lab and a flat cap, who stopped me on the beach one afternoon and told me about a hole about a hundred yards offshore that he used to fish back in the day. I went back the next few days and had the best porgy fishing of my life. You can't google or AI that type of knowledge.



Scup "porgy" (Stenotomus chrysops) – One of the most abundant, accessible, and sustainable fish.

The recipes here are built mostly around fish I've actually caught—mackerel, cabezon, sea perch, bluefish, porgy, striped bass—as well as some I still hope to catch one day, across two coasts and a lot of years. They're designed to be flexible, because that's how fishing works. You don't always catch what you're after, or anything for that matter.

The core purpose of this book is simple: eating what's near you, what's plentiful, and what's low on the food chain is one of the most direct things any of us can do for the health of the oceans, as well as our own health. You don't need a policy degree to act on it, and you certainly don't need to be a chef. You need a relationship with the place you live—whether that means a line in the water, a conversation with the guy at the fish counter, or just knowing what's actually running in the bay this time of year.



Cabezon (Scorpaenichthys marmoratus) – Caught in Pacific Grove, California on a Fishbites, squid, and shrimp trifecta.

Chapter 1

Eat Small Fish

Ask most people what they want to catch and they'll tell you they want the big one. That's the dream, the trophy, the fish that makes a good story. But if you ask a fisheries biologist, or an old commercial fisherman, you start to realize that the big one is usually the wrong one to take home.

Larger, older fish are the most reproductively valuable animals in a population. A big female striped bass isn't just one fish—she's hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of future fish. One thirty-pound striper lays more eggs than two fifteen-pound stripers combined. Unfortunately, she's also had more time to accumulate heavy metals, microplastics, and parasites in her tissue. The biggest fish are often the least healthy to eat and the costliest to remove. The math works out pretty clearly in favor of the smaller ones.



Striped Bass (Morone saxatilis) – Keeper caught one morning before work on a special handcrafted wooden lure bought from a fisherman in Puerto Rico.

This is the logic behind slot limits—regulations that set both a minimum and a maximum size for fish you're allowed to keep. The idea is simple: you protect the young fish so the population doesn't collapse, and you protect the old fish because they're your best breeders. What you're left with is a window, a sweet spot of fish that are mature enough to have already spawned, but young enough that their removal doesn't gut the reproductive capacity of the whole population.

It's simple Darwinism. By setting slot limits you're artificially selecting for a population that stays healthy and reproduces in large numbers, rather than one that gets progressively smaller and weaker over generations.



Bluefish "Bonac tarpon" "yellow-eyed demon" (Pomatomus saltatrix) – A gator and a cocktail blue.

The same logic applies even when there are no regulations. Smaller fish of the same species almost always have firmer flesh, cleaner flavor, and fewer parasites. A twenty-pound "gator" bluefish is a completely different eating experience than a five-pound "cocktail" blue. The bigger fish tend to be mushier; the smaller ones are usually better on the plate.

The recipes in this book skew toward smaller, more abundant species. Mackerel, perch, porgy—these are not the glamour fish. They don't end up on many restaurant menus. But they're plentiful, they're healthy, they're delicious, and taking them doesn't cost the ocean much.



Striped Sea Perch (Embiotoca lateralis) – Caught and released in Pacific Grove, California on a shrimp and Fishbites sandwich.



PAN-FRIED ANCHOVIES

Courtesy of Hunter Palmeri

INGREDIENTS

- Fresh anchovies, cleaned head-on or off
- Flour or cornmeal
- Salt, pepper
- Olive oil

METHOD

Score the fish 3–4 times and season with salt and pepper. Lightly flour the fish making sure the whole thing is covered.

Pan-fry in olive oil 1–2 minutes per side until crisp and golden.

Also works with: *Any small whole fish (smelts, small sardines, mackerel)*

Chimichurri Sauce

- 1 cup parsley
- 2 tbsp oregano
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 lemons + zest
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Blend or finely chop all ingredients and spoon generously over hot fish.

WHOLE FRIED PORGY

INGREDIENTS

- Whole scaled porgy
- Salt, pepper, garlic powder (or fish seasoning)
- Flour or cornstarch
- Neutral oil (canola or vegetable)

METHOD

Score fish deeply on both sides and generously season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.

Cover the fish completely in flour or cornstarch.

Fry in neutral oil at medium-high heat until the skin is golden and crispy.

Serve with lemon wedges and flaky salt.

Also works with: *Any whole small fish – snapper, sea bream, small bass & rock fish*



Atlantic Menhaden aka "bunker" or "pogy" (Brevoortia tyrannus) – Photo by Sutton Lynch documenting the return of bunker to Long Island via drone. @suttonlynch

Chapter 2

Bunker and the Bottom of the Food Chain

There is a fish that most people have never heard of that may be more important to the health of the Atlantic coast than any other single species. It doesn't end up on menus. You wouldn't order it at a restaurant. It's oily, bony, and small. It's called menhaden, or bunker, depending on where you're from, and in my lifetime, I have watched it come back from near extinction off the coast of Long Island.

Menhaden are filter feeders. They eat phytoplankton, they clean the water, and they are eaten by almost everything else—striped bass, bluefish, tuna, sharks, whales, dolphins, ospreys. They are the link between the microscopic world at the base of the ocean's food chain and the large, dramatic animals at the top of it. When menhaden disappeared, so did everything that depended on them. The bluefish blitzes that older lifeguards and my family talked about, thousands of fish frenzying and churning the surface to white foam within swimming distance of the beach, were gone before I was old enough to see them. The stories felt like folklore.

Then, slowly, the bunker came back.



Branzino style bluefish – check out those chompers. There are folktales of people getting their toes bit off after accidentally getting caught in a blitz. I’m personally more scared of these guys than sharks. I got bit once on the back of my ankle after landing one on a boat. I can attest to those razor sharp teeth, they took a good chunk out of me, but I got the last laugh.

What happens when a massive school of menhaden as far as the eye can see moves through shallow coastal water? Everything shows up. Striped bass pushing bait to the surface. Bluefish slicing through the school from below, frenzied enough that they've been known to bite each other in half, and occasionally an unlucky swimmer. Spinner sharks launching themselves out of the water and rotating in the air. Threshers with whiplike tails longer than their own bodies sticking out of the water striking bunker. Giant thousand-pound bluefin tuna fully breaching the surface. And whales—mostly humpbacks, some coming within a hundred yards of the beach, close enough you could basically look down their throats every time they came up for a mouthful of bunker.

I've been spoiled by having the best job in the world, lifeguarding. I just got to sit on the beach for eight hours a day taking it all in. Thinking back now has made me realize how lucky I was to be able to see firsthand the rebirth of an entire ecosystem, triggered by one small, unglamorous fish that most people have never heard of.



Humpback Whale (Megaptera novaeangliae) – A common sight now on Long Island beaches. Twenty years ago, whale sightings were very rare.

The menhaden comeback is a conservation success story, though an incomplete one. The species is still heavily harvested for fish oil supplements and animal feed. But even a partial recovery has been enough to show what the ecosystem is capable of when the base of the food chain is left intact. It raises a question: if one small, overlooked bait fish can restore that much life to an ecosystem, what happens when we start eating lower on the food chain ourselves?



Both of these photos were taken on my kayak. A little too close for comfort.

BRANZINO-STYLE BLUEFISH WITH LADOLEMONO

INGREDIENTS

- Whole fish – almost anything you can fit in your oven
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- Red onion, sliced thin
- Cherry tomatoes, halved

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Score the fish several times on each side. Rub lightly with olive oil and season generously, including inside the cavity.

Stuff the cavity full of lemon slices and red onion.

Roast on the center rack for about 5 minutes. Turn the fish over and cook another 5–7 minutes until the fish is flaky.

Turn on the broiler and place the fish 6 inches from the heat for 3–4 minutes until the skin is charred.

Plate immediately and drizzle with Ladolemono sauce. Decorate with cherry tomatoes.

Also works with: *Whole snapper, striped bass, sea bream, black sea bass*

Ladolemono Sauce

- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1–2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp black pepper

Combine lemon juice, oregano, garlic, salt and pepper in a bowl or jar. While stirring vigorously, slowly drizzle in the olive oil to emulsify.





GRILLED SKIN-ON BLUEFISH

INGREDIENTS

- Bluefish fillets, scaled with skin on
- Olive oil
- Lemon
- Garlic (powder or fresh)
- Salt and pepper

METHOD

Apply a light coat of olive oil to the fish and season both sides generously with salt, pepper, and garlic.

Get the grill ripping hot. Grill skin-side down over high heat until the skin is crisp and naturally releases from the grates. Close the lid to hold in the heat.

Finish with a squeeze of lemon and fresh herbs.

Also works with: *Mackerel, sardines, salmon – all high-fat oily fish benefit from the same approach*



Pacific Mackerel (Scomber japonicus) – Small, tasty "bait" fish. Caught on a sabiki rig off the fisherman's wharf in Monterey.

Chapter 3

Two Coasts, One Fish

When I moved from Long Island to Monterey, I expected to have to learn a whole new set of fish. And in a lot of ways I did—cabezon, striped sea perch, ling cod, greenling, rockfish, all species I'd never targeted before. But one of the first fish I caught on the California coast was a mackerel, which is also one of the most abundant fish in the Atlantic. There's something reassuring about that.

The coastlines are completely different, the ecosystems are different, the culture around fishing is different, but the mackerel is there either way, abundant and willing and good to eat. However, the Pacific Mackerel does differ from the Atlantic or “Boston” Mackerel, shime saba sushi is made from the Boston mackerel exclusively but I'm not sure why. I haven't had the chance to test out the saba method with a West coast mack quite yet, but I have a feeling it'll be fantastic when I do.

Mackerel is the through-line of this book. It's small, it's fast-reproducing, it's low on the food chain, and it is genuinely underrated as a food fish. It has a reputation for being too strong, too oily, too fishy—which mostly means people are eating it wrong, or eating it old. Sometimes when people see you taking them home, they'll often ask “are you really going to eat the bait?” Fresh mackerel, cooked simply, is one of the better things that comes out of the ocean.

It's also cheap, if you're buying rather than catching, and available on both coasts.



A good day of mackerel fishing. All on sabiki off the fisherman's wharf in Monterey.



Mackerel on the sabiki rig. - The sabiki rig is a great tool for catching small schooling fish. It can have about 6-8 small hooks lined up vertically with tiny flies that mimic micro schooling fish.

The mackerel also gives me an excuse to talk about something I want to be clear about, most of the recipes in this book are interchangeable. Not in a vague, anything-goes way, but in a real, practical way that reflects how fishing actually works. You don't always catch what you're after. You catch what's there. A good recipe should be able to absorb that reality. Firm white fish swap for each other easily. Oily fish like mackerel, bluefish, and sardines behave similarly in a pan or on a grill. The specific fish matters less than its general character: how fatty it is, how thick the fillet, how delicate the flavor.

A Rough Guide to Fish Substitutions

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	BEST FOR
Oily & Strong-Flavored	<i>Mackerel, bluefish, sardines, herring, salmon, tuna</i>	Best grilled, smoked, or pan-seared with acid (lemon, vinegar) to cut richness. Eat within 1–2 days of catch.
Firm & Mild White Fish	<i>Cabazon, striped bass, seabass, porgy, halibut, rockfish</i>	Most versatile group. Sushi, ceviche, roasted whole, blackened, grilled, or battered and fried.
Delicate & Thin-Filleted	<i>Striped sea perch, fluke, small rockfish</i>	Keep it simple: hot pan, olive oil, salt, something bright on top. Pan-fry or roast whole.

Most of what follows in this book falls into one of those three categories. When a recipe calls for mackerel, I'll tell you what else works. When it calls for striper, same thing. The goal is for you to come home with whatever you caught or whatever looked good at the fish counter and find something here that fits.



In labor striped sea perch & babies caught and released in Pacific Grove on Fishbites and shrimp. This mama started giving live birth right after I caught her.



OVEN-BAKED MACKEREL

Courtesy of Youlin and Morin

INGREDIENTS

- Whole or head-off mackerel
- Olive oil
- Garlic powder
- Paprika
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°F. Score the mackerel 3–4 times on each side.

Apply a light coat of olive oil and season generously with garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper.

Bake for 12–15 minutes. Do not overcook—mackerel gets tough quickly.

Finish with fresh parsley and a squeeze of lemon.

Also works with: *Sardines, bluefish fillets, Boston mackerel*

NOTE: The recipe for the braised beef and tofu is in the index.



SHIME SABA (SUSHI-STYLE MACKEREL)

INGREDIENTS

- Mackerel fillets, skin-on
- Generous amount of salt
- Rice vinegar (enough to submerge fillets)
- Nori sheets
- Soy sauce (for serving)
- Sticky rice (optional, for serving)

METHOD

Generously coat the mackerel fillets with salt and let them rest uncovered in the fridge for a few hours or overnight.

Gently rinse the salt off the fillets and fully submerge them in rice vinegar. Cover with nori. Refrigerate another few hours or overnight.

Remove the fillets, briefly rinse with cold water, and pat dry.

Carefully peel off the skin from a corner—it should come off like a sticker.

Use your fingers or tweezers to remove all pin bones running through the center of the fillet. Run your finger along the flesh to find them all.

Slice thin and serve plain with soy sauce, or over sticky rice.



A glorious pile of trash. - One man's trash is another man's treasure. Gator bluefish on a mag darter, perfect candidates for the smoker.

Chapter 4

Trash Fish

Every fishing community has them—the fish that "serious" anglers wave off, the ones that steal your bait or crowd out the species you actually came for. In my experience, these dismissals are almost always wrong, and they're often worth examining for reasons that go beyond the taste.

Take the porgy for example. On Long Island, porgies are considered by a lot of recreational fishermen to be a nuisance. Bony bait-stealers. But this reputation has a history that goes beyond taste, and it's an uncomfortable one. East Hampton once had a substantial Black community—people who had lived and worked there long before the Hamptons became synonymous with wealth and second homes. They fished, as many working communities do, for sustenance. Porgy was plentiful, accessible from shore, and good to eat.

The response from some white locals was to rename it the n-word fish. The intent was clear enough: to mark certain food as beneath them, to associate a perfectly good fish with the people eating it and degrade both in the same gesture. Gentrification eventually displaced that community almost entirely, but the distaste for the fish lingers, detached now from its original target and transferred onto the Latino fishermen who today are most likely to be out on the beaches keeping their porgy.

I think about this when I watch people walk past the porgy at a fish counter without a second glance. Food stigma has a long memory, even when the people who created it have forgotten why.

The porgy, for the record, is a genuinely excellent fish. Sweet, firm, mild. It takes well to high heat—grilled whole or pan fried. Even eaten raw it's hard to beat. The bones are real but manageable. It was good enough to feed generations of people who needed it.



Spanish Mackerel (Scomberomorus maculatus) – Another "trash" fish that's utterly delicious.

Bluefish has a different problem. They're voracious predators and will outrun stripers to lures. Usually when the blues are biting, nothing else is. Since stripers are the main target, blues get pushed off as a nuisance. Nobody is attaching history to it; people just think it tastes bad. And I'll be honest: they're not entirely wrong, under certain conditions. Bluefish is extremely oily. It deteriorates fast. The oil that makes bluefish go bad fast is the same oil that gives it extraordinary flavor. A bluefish straight from the water is an entirely different animal than one that sat in a cooler for two days. You just have to treat it right and eat it quickly.

The commercial market has largely written bluefish off because it doesn't travel well by the time it reaches an inland fish counter; it's often already past its best. So it stays cheap, it stays local, and the people who know it tend to be the people who caught it themselves. There are worse ways to end up as a regional secret. These are one of the best sport fish there is, they will hit just about anything you throw in their face and best of all they jump out of the water so much they've received the nickname "Bonac tarpon."

Double aside here – tarpon are giant fish known for their dramatic jumps out of the water down south in Florida and Bonac is a nickname for the people from East Hampton, and the mascot of the high school, "the Bonackers." It comes from the fishermen who work out on Accabonac harbor and bay.

A third and often overlooked trash fish is the albie, or false albacore. They are true tunas and truly the sport fisherman's dream. They fight like no other fish of their size. They are late-fall visitors in the Northeast but can be finicky to hook. Yet no one keeps these tiny tunas. Bled out immediately and kept on ice, they taste like regular tuna. The dark red flesh is very similar in look to bluefin, just much smaller.

The case for these fish is the same case running through this whole book: abundance matters. Porgy, bluefish, and albie are not in trouble. They are not being overfished. People don't like to eat these fish because they are simply unfashionable. But unfashionable fish are exactly the ones we should be eating more of.



Little Tunny "False Albacore," "Albie" (Euthynnus alletteratus) – Beautiful, and probably the most fun fish I've ever caught. A true tuna; it fights like one and tastes like one too.



Fresh albie meat – looks like ahi to me. Tastes like it too.



GRILLED FALSE ALBACORE

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless, skinless albie fillets
- Soy sauce
- Sesame oil
- Honey
- Salt, pepper, and cayenne
- Green onions, sesame seeds, lime (to garnish)

METHOD

Combine soy sauce, sesame oil, honey, salt, and cayenne. Marinate the fillets for at least 30 minutes.

Heat the grill to maximum temperature. Sear for about 1 minute per side.

Aim for medium-rare—the center should still be deep red.

Garnish with sliced green onions, toasted sesame seeds, and lime wedges.

Also works with: *Bluefin or yellowfin tuna, skipjack, bonito*



CEVICHE

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless, skinless fish fillets
- Juice of limes, lemons, and oranges
- Jalapeño or other hot pepper, minced
- Mango, diced
- Red onion, thinly sliced
- Avocado, diced (add last)
- Cucumber, diced
- Roma tomatoes, diced
- Cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper

METHOD

Place thinly sliced red onion in a bowl. Squeeze all citrus juice over the onion until completely covered. Set aside.

Cut the fish into small, bite-sized cubes. Finely dice the jalapeño, mango, tomatoes, and cucumber.

Mix fish, jalapeño, mango, tomatoes, cucumber, and cilantro into the citrus-onion mixture. Add more citrus if needed. Let it cure for 30–45 minutes.

Season with salt and pepper. When ready to serve, gently fold in the avocado.

Serve with fried plantains or saltines.

Also works with: *Any firm fish works – albie, striped bass, fluke, cabezon, sea bass*





ALBIE SUSHI / POKE BOWL

INGREDIENTS

- Albie (or bluefin/yellowfin tuna), cubed
- Soy sauce
- Toasted sesame oil
- Ponzu sauce
- Spicy mayo
- Scallion, edamame, mango, red onion, avocado, cucumber
- Furikake seasoning
- Sticky rice

METHOD

Cook or buy sticky rice.

Toss fish cubes in sesame oil and let sit briefly.

Build your bowl: rice on the bottom, fish in one corner, toppings arranged around.

Drizzle with soy sauce, ponzu, or spicy mayo. Garnish with scallions and furikake.



Tiny striper, caught on a tiny mag darter.

Chapter 5

An Aside on Introduced Fish

A note before we go further: not everything that ends up in local waters belongs there.

Striped bass were introduced to the California coast in the 1870s, shipped via train from New Jersey in milk cans filled with seawater. They established themselves in the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, spread along the coast, and have been here ever since—long enough that most California anglers think of them as a local fish. In some ways they've earned that status. A hundred and fifty years is a long tenure. But it's worth being clear about what they are and what they do.

Striped bass are anadromous, meaning they spawn in freshwater and live in saltwater—the same lifecycle as Pacific salmon. They occupy the same ecological niche as salmon in California's river systems, which means they are directly competing with a fish that the entire coastal ecosystem, from bears to orcas to indigenous communities, has organized itself around for thousands of years. Beyond the competition, striped bass are voracious predators: salmon fry, crabs, smaller fish, whatever is available. The impact on juvenile salmon populations is real and documented.



About the size of fish I'd love to be eating here in California, branzino style. Caught on a soft plastic swim bait on my 22nd birthday during my lunch break from the hatchery – 2022.

And yet striped bass are not classified as an invasive species in California. The most common answer is that they were introduced so long ago, and have become so economically and culturally significant to California anglers, that reclassification would be politically difficult. But the honest answer might just be that "invasive" is a category we apply inconsistently, often based on how much people like the fish in question.

I bring this up not to argue that no one should eat striped bass in California—quite the opposite. I think California should drop the minimum size limit and allow an open season on them. Local doesn't always mean native. Local doesn't always mean ecologically neutral. Sometimes the fish that feels most familiar is the one with the most complicated relationship to the place it's living in. That's worth knowing when you're deciding what to put on your plate. For example, in Florida, the lionfish have been wreaking havoc on the ecosystem, so the state went beyond just declaring open season on them, they actually put a bounty on their heads. Unless someone has some kind of explanation of why striped bass aren't considered invasive in California, I think Fish and Game should abolish the size and bag limit on stripers. The smaller ones taste best anyway.

Stock Image

BLACKENED STRIPER ON CAST IRON

INGREDIENTS

- Striper fillet, boneless and skinless
- Butter
- Cajun seasoning (generous amount)
- Cast iron pan

METHOD

Heat your cast iron pan over the highest heat until it is ripping hot.

Season the fillet heavily on all sides with Cajun seasoning.

Add butter to the pan. Sear the fillet until a deep, dark crust forms on both sides.

Doesn't get much easier than this.

Also works with: *Any firm white fish – sea bass, cabezon, rockfish, halibut*



BATTERED AND FRIED ROCKFISH

Courtesy of Hunter

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless and skinless filets
- 2 ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 3 cups sparking water
- Canola or vegetable Oil
- Salt

METHOD

Whisk the flour, corn starch, and a pinch of salt and the mineral water in a bowl. Heat the oil so it's deep enough to fully submerge the fish into about 350°. Then dip your fish into the batter and allow any of the excess to drip off and then add it into the hot oil and cook it until it's crisp and golden. Serve as a sandwich or make some tacos.

Also works with: *White seabass, halibut, cabezon, rockfish, striped bass*



GUACAMOLE Y PICO DE GALLO PARA TACOS

INGREDIENTS

- Juice of limes or lemons
- Jalapeño or other hot pepper, minced
- Red onion, cubed (for guac)
- White onion, cubed (for pico)
- Avocado
- Cucumber, diced
- Roma tomatoes, diced
- Cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- Mango, diced (for pico - optional or substitute for other fruit like peach)

METHOD

Guacamole: In a large bowl, mash up your avocados with a fork until smooth. Leave the citrus, salt and pepper for the end. Add in all the ingredients (minus white onion and mango) and gently combine. Then add citrus, salt and pepper in small amounts. Taste it after every addition to make sure it tastes right. Guac can handle a lot of salt.

Pico de gallo: Combine all ingredients in a bowl (minus red onion and avocado). Salt and citrus to taste. Let it sit for 20 minutes before eating.

Tip: If you leave the avocado pit in the guac, it'll take longer for it to go brown.



Four-month-old clams we raised from microscopic size. The striking red and white stripes are a genetic mutation introduced into the hatchery's brood to help track the success of the hatchery over time. It's just a way to differentiate "natural" clams and hatchery born ones.

Chapter 6

The Shellfish Chapter

My first job out of college was at the Town of East Hampton's shellfish hatchery. I took it because I was looking for environmental work and I couldn't think of a more direct form than getting more filter feeders into the water.

Oysters, clams, and scallops filter enormous volumes of water. A single oyster can filter up to fifty gallons a day. They build reef structures that other species depend on. They pull nitrogen out of the water column. They are, in a very literal sense, doing environmental remediation full time, for free, and have been for millions of years. Putting more of them in the water felt like the most impactful environmental job I could find.

Among other things, East Hampton has also made me insufferably spoiled about shellfish. The town issues a recreational shellfishing license for ten dollars a year. Ten dollars. For that, you can walk out to the flats at low tide with a rake and a bucket and come home with enough clams and oysters for a week. We have an all-you-can-eat oyster buffet—you just have to collect the oysters yourself.



Oyster and clam buffet – you can grill or smoke oysters, but I think they’re best enjoyed raw with a little lime on top. Raw clams are a bit more unusual but they’re great because they have much more of an actual bite to them compared to oysters.

Blue Point oysters—named for Blue Point, a hamlet on the south shore of Long Island—were once among the most commercially significant shellfish in the United States. In the late 1800s, New York Harbor held an estimated 350 square miles of oyster reef. They filtered the harbor. They fed the city. They were so plentiful that oysters were working-class food, sold from street carts for pennies. Then came overharvesting, industrial pollution, and disease. By the mid-twentieth century, the oyster population in New York waters had been reduced by roughly ninety-nine percent.

What exists now in East Hampton is real and worth protecting, but it is also a shadow of what was there. The abundance feels generous until you understand the scale of what preceded it.



Me and my buddy Logan about to dive in frigid November waters to look for scallops and other tasty treats.

The scallops are a different story, and a harder one. The bay scallop population in East Hampton has been devastated by warming water temperatures and algal blooms. What's left is so scarce and commercially valuable that the season, when it opens, turns every person with a boat into something resembling a commercial fisherman. I've heard of guns getting pulled at boat ramps.



Our haul – not too bad. If I remember correctly, we sat on the tailgate and froze our fingers off, shucking the scallops and eating them all before we could even get home.



Bay Scallops (Argopecten irradians) – Doesn't get any fresher than this.



Lab grown algae in the hatchery, used to raise hundreds of millions of shellfish.

Stock photo

CIOPPINO

A la Hunter's Grandpa

INGREDIENTS

- 1–2 lbs clams per person
- Sherry and clam juice
- Olive oil
- Garlic (crushed), basil, celery, oregano
- Italian parsley
- Sweet yellow onions, carrots, bell peppers
- Canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, tomato paste
- Smoked paprika
- Water

METHOD

Sweat onion, garlic, celery, bell pepper, and carrots in olive oil until softened.

Add oregano, basil, smoked paprika, and tomato paste. Deglaze with sherry.

Add canned tomato sauce, canned tomatoes, clam juice, and water. Simmer on low as long as possible—best if cooked overnight and used the next day.

Add all seafood to the sauce and cook until clams open and fish is done. Discard any unopened clams.

Serve with garlic bread.

Also works with: *Add any seafood: boneless fillets, crab, shrimp, scallops, mussels*

Stock photo

LINGUINE WITH CLAM SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- Linguine pasta
- 1–2 lbs clams per person
- Olive oil and butter
- Dried parsley and basil
- Minced garlic and finely chopped shallots
- Dry white wine
- Crushed red pepper flakes
- Black pepper
- Lemon juice and zest

METHOD

Cook linguine according to package directions.

While pasta cooks, sauté shallots and garlic in olive oil until golden.

Add white wine, red pepper flakes, clams, and parsley. Cover and simmer until clams open, under 10 minutes. Discard any unopened clams.

Add the pasta directly to the pan with the clams. Toss until pasta absorbs most of the brothy sauce.

Finish with butter, lemon juice, zest, and more parsley.

Stock photo

PAN-SEARED SCALLOPS WITH GARLIC BUTTER SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- Scallops (dry-packed preferred)
- Olive oil
- Butter (or bacon grease for extra flavor)
- Garlic (3–4 cloves)
- Lemon juice
- ¼ cup white wine or broth
- Salt
- Fresh parsley (to garnish)

METHOD

Pat the scallops completely dry—this is the key to a proper sear.

Heat pan with oil to medium-high. Sear scallops on the first side without moving them for about 90 seconds, until they naturally release and have a deep golden-brown crust. Flip and sear 60 seconds more. Do not overcook.

Remove scallops from the pan. Add butter to the pan, scraping up any browned bits. Add garlic, lemon juice, and white wine. Cook for 2 minutes.

Pour the sauce over the scallops. Garnish with fresh parsley.

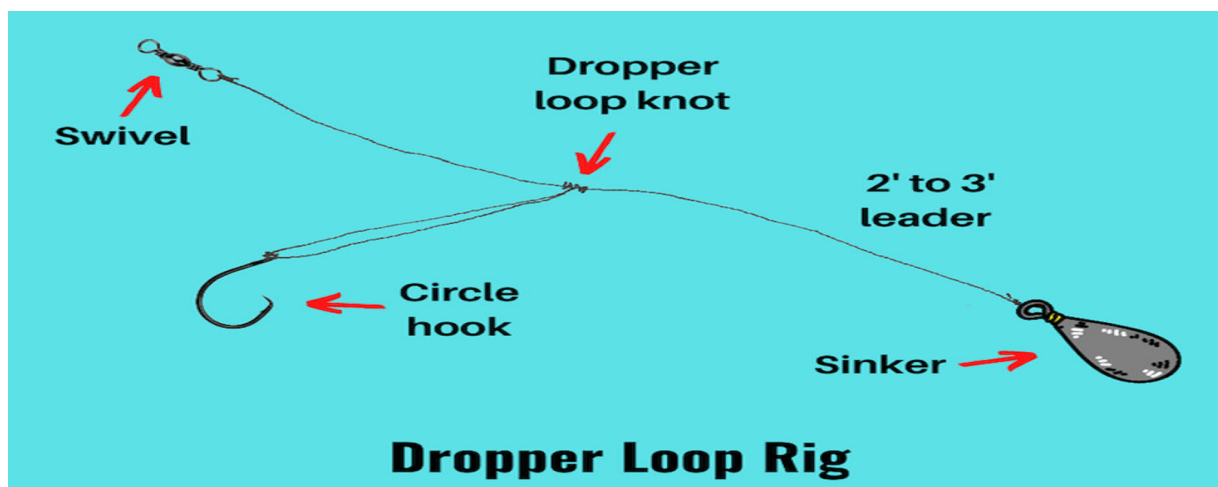


Chinook “King” Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) – caught by Hunter and his family on their commercial boat. Take method unknown.

Closing: Shifting Baselines

When I first moved to Monterey, one of the first things I did was go fishing with my friend Hunter, whose father Dan is a commercial fisherman and owns Sea Harvest in Monterey. Dan's fleet has undergone massive changes, as has the rest of the commercial fleet in California—largely for the better. They've figured out how to reduce bycatch to nearly zero by using long lines instead of traditional gill nets or trawling. This type of direct targeting is an incredibly effective way to ensure the least amount of ecological damage.

One of the few things I brought with me on my move to California was my nicest reel. Dan gave me a rod to use. I set up my rig like I usually do back East—a chicken rig: a weight at the bottom, then about a foot above, you tie a dropper loop and attach the hooks. Hunter and Dan inspected my rig and approved. I hooked on a piece of squid, cast it out, and started waiting.



Nothing. We changed spots. Nothing. Not even a nibble. This didn't bother me much. Not catching anything is a normal part of fishing, and I was new here. I had no expectations and just sitting on the beach, in the sun watching the waves is fine fishing for me. Dan and Hunter were both surprised, nothing even stole my bait; it was like literally nothing was there, not even a crab. They told me stories of how they'd come out there and catch tons of rock fish when Hunter was a kid. That was twenty years ago. He said it used to be easier; that there used to be more fish. It could have just been a bad day.



Black-and-yellow Rockfish (Sebastes chrysomelas) – Caught and released off the Coast Guard Pier in Monterey on a squid, shrimp, and Fishbites tripecta.

We went out another time to try poke poling—a technique where you take a long bamboo rod with a short line and a hook, walk the rocky shoreline at low tide, and stick your bait into crevices looking for rockfish and monkey face prickleback tucked inside. Hunter and I walked the rocks for an hour, working every hole we could find. Nothing. Eventually Dan came over to show us how it was done, tried himself for fifteen minutes, and caught nothing, and put the pole down. He didn't say much.

Dan knows these rocks. He has fished this coast his whole life. He knows the tides, the seasons, the spots that hold fish. That kind of knowledge takes decades to accumulate and can't really be written down—it lives in the body, in the habit of showing up to the same places across years and paying attention. The gap between what someone like Dan knows and what the ocean is currently doing seems to be widening.

This cookbook isn't a solution to anything. It's more like a record of two coastlines, a handful of fish, and the belief that paying attention to what you eat is one small way of staying connected to what's actually going on around you and in the water. The recipes here are simple on purpose. They don't ask much of you except that you start with something good, something local, something that didn't travel too far to get to your plate.

The rest is just cooking.



Prime poke poling grounds close to the Del Monte Forest. There's got to be fish out there somewhere.



King Salmon safely filleted and released by Hunter. Take method unknown.

SMOKED SALMON (NOT LOX)

INGREDIENTS

- Skin-on salmon fillets
- Brown sugar (generous)
- Salt (generous)
- Black pepper

METHOD

Generously dry-brine (season) your salmon fillet on all sides and leave it uncovered in the fridge overnight.

Set your smoker to 225°F.

Smoke low and slow until the salmon is flaky but still moist. This may take 1.5–2.5 hours depending on thickness.

Let rest a few minutes before serving.



SMOKED BLUEFISH

INGREDIENTS

- Bluefish fillets, scaled with skin on
- Japanese BBQ sauce (e.g., Yakiniku)

METHOD

Marinate the fillets in BBQ sauce for at least a few hours, overnight in the fridge is best.

Set the smoker to 225°F and smoke for 1.5–2 hours until the fish is flaky.

Enjoy as is, on a bagel, or use as the base for bluefish dip.

SMOKED BLUEFISH DIP

A real Bonac recipe

INGREDIENTS

- Smoked bluefish (enough for a good pile)
- ¼ cup red onion, coarsely chopped
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 2–3 tbsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp salt

METHOD

Remove the skin from the smoked bluefish and break the meat into pieces.

Pulse onion in a food processor until finely chopped.

Add cream cheese and pulse until blended.

Add fish, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Pulse until evenly mixed.

Serve with crackers, bagel chips, or sliced cucumber.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to my professors, Anna and Denny, for being such fantastic and interesting people and for allowing us to take such artistic liberties in our final class projects for our International Marine Law class. We spent a lot of time in class discussing local ecological knowledge and its increasing role in international conservation efforts, so this really felt like a nice way for me to give my two cents and contribute my own local ecological knowledge.

Thanks also to Hunter Palmeri for cooking with me, and his father Dan for the stories and fishing rod, Youlin and Morin for the braised beef recipe and to Sutton Lynch for his incredible drone photography of the bunker migration, and to everyone who shared recipes, spots, and stories.

Be sure to take a moment to think about the local knowledge you have and the privilege that comes with being able to express it freely.

I hope you enjoyed this really weird cookbook.

Hopefully you learned something beyond the fact that I love fishing.

— Eliot Fisher

Index

A Rough Guide to Fish Substitutions (Page33)

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	BEST FOR
Oily & Strong-Flavored	<i>Mackerel, bluefish, sardines, herring, salmon, tuna</i>	Best grilled, smoked, or pan-seared with acid (lemon, vinegar) to cut richness. Eat within 1–2 days of catch.
Firm & Mild White Fish	<i>Cabazon, striped bass, seabass, porgy, halibut, rockfish</i>	Most versatile group. Sushi, ceviche, roasted whole, blackened, grilled, or battered and fried.
Delicate & Thin-Filleted	<i>Striped sea perch, fluke, small rockfish</i>	Keep it simple: hot pan, olive oil, salt, something bright on top. Pan-fry or roast whole.

ALBIE SUSHI / POKE BOWL (page 52)

INGREDIENTS

- Albie (or bluefin/yellowfin tuna), cubed
- Soy sauce
- Toasted sesame oil
- Ponzu sauce
- Spicy mayo
- Scallion, edamame, mango, red onion, avocado, cucumber
- Furikake seasoning
- Sticky rice

METHOD

Cook or buy sticky rice.

Toss fish cubes in sesame oil and let sit briefly.

Build your bowl: rice on the bottom, fish in one corner, toppings arranged around.

Drizzle with soy sauce, ponzu, or spicy mayo. Garnish with scallions and furikake.

BATTERED AND FRIED ROCKFISH (page 60)

Courtesy of Hunter

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless and skinless filets
- 2 ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 3 cups sparkling water
- Canola or vegetable Oil
- Salt

METHOD

Whisk the flour, corn starch, and a pinch of salt and the mineral water in a bowl. Heat the oil so it's deep enough to fully submerge the fish into about 350°. Then dip your fish into the batter and allow any of the excess to drip off and then add it into the hot oil and cook it until it's crisp and golden. Serve as a sandwich or make some tacos.

Also works with: *White seabass, halibut, cabezon, rockfish, striped bass*

BRANZINO-STYLE BLUEFISH WITH LADOLEMONO (Page 25)

INGREDIENTS

- Whole fish – almost anything you can fit in your oven
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- Red onion, sliced thin
- Cherry tomatoes, halved

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Score the fish several times on each side. Rub lightly with olive oil and season generously, including inside the cavity.

Stuff the cavity full of lemon slices and red onion.

Roast on the center rack for about 5 minutes. Turn the fish over and cook another 5–7 minutes until the fish is flaky.

Turn on the broiler and place the fish 6 inches from the heat for 3–4 minutes until the skin is charred.

Plate immediately and drizzle with Ladolemono sauce. Decorate with cherry tomatoes.

Also works with: *Whole snapper, striped bass, sea bream, black sea bass*

Ladolemono Sauce

- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1–2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp black pepper

Combine lemon juice, oregano, garlic, salt and pepper in a bowl or jar. While stirring vigorously, slowly drizzle in the olive oil to emulsify.

BLACKENED STRIPER ON CAST IRON (page 58)

INGREDIENTS

- Striper fillet, boneless and skinless
- Butter
- Cajun seasoning (generous amount)
- Cast iron pan

METHOD

Heat your cast iron pan over the highest heat until it is ripping hot.

Season the fillet heavily on all sides with Cajun seasoning.

Add butter to the pan. Sear the fillet until a deep, dark crust forms on both sides.

Doesn't get much easier than this.

Also works with: *Any firm white fish – sea bass, cabezon, rockfish, halibut*

CEVICHE (Page 50)

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless, skinless fish fillets
- Juice of limes, lemons, and oranges
- Jalapeño or other hot pepper, minced
- Mango, diced
- Red onion, thinly sliced
- Avocado, diced (add last)
- Cucumber, diced
- Roma tomatoes, diced
- Cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper

METHOD

Place thinly sliced red onion in a bowl. Squeeze all citrus juice over the onion until completely covered. Set aside.

Cut the fish into small, bite-sized cubes. Finely dice the jalapeño, mango, tomatoes, and cucumber.

Mix fish, jalapeño, mango, tomatoes, cucumber, and cilantro into the citrus-onion mixture. Add more citrus if needed. Let it cure for 30–45 minutes.

Season with salt and pepper. When ready to serve, gently fold in the avocado.

Serve with fried plantains or saltines.

Also works with: *Any firm fish works – albie, striped bass, fluke, cabezon, sea bass*

CIOPPINO (page 72)

A la Hunter's Grandpa

INGREDIENTS

- 1–2 lbs clams per person
- Sherry and clam juice
- Olive oil
- Garlic (crushed), basil, celery, oregano
- Italian parsley
- Sweet yellow onions, carrots, bell peppers
- Canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, tomato paste
- Smoked paprika
- Water

METHOD

Sweat onion, garlic, celery, bell pepper, and carrots in olive oil until softened.

Add oregano, basil, smoked paprika, and tomato paste. Deglaze with sherry.

Add canned tomato sauce, canned tomatoes, clam juice, and water. Simmer on low as long as possible—best if cooked overnight and used the next day.

Add all seafood to the sauce and cook until clams open and fish is done. Discard any unopened clams.

Serve with garlic bread.

Also works with: *Add any seafood: boneless fillets, crab, shrimp, scallops, mussels*

GUACAMOLE Y PICO DE GALLO PARA TACOS (page 62)

INGREDIENTS

- Juice of limes or lemons
- Jalapeño or other hot pepper, minced
- Red onion, cubed (for guac)
- White onion, cubed (for pico)
- Avocado
- Cucumber, diced
- Roma tomatoes, diced
- Cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- Mango, diced (for pico - optional or substitute for other fruit like peach)

METHOD

Guacamole: In a large bowl, mash up your avocados with a fork until smooth. Leave the citrus, salt and pepper for the end. Add in all the ingredients (minus white onion and mango) and gently combine. Then add citrus, salt and pepper in small amounts. Taste it after every addition to make sure it tastes right. Guac can handle a lot of salt.

Pico de gallo: Combine all ingredients in a bowl (minus red onion and avocado). Salt and citrus to taste. Let it sit for 20 minutes before eating.

Tip: If you leave the avocado pit in the guac, it'll take longer for it to go brown.

GRILLED FALSE ALBACORE (page 48)

INGREDIENTS

- Boneless, skinless albie fillets
- Soy sauce
- Sesame oil
- Honey
- Salt, pepper, and cayenne
- Green onions, sesame seeds, lime (to garnish)

METHOD

Combine soy sauce, sesame oil, honey, salt, and cayenne. Marinate the fillets for at least 30 minutes.

Heat the grill to maximum temperature. Sear for about 1 minute per side.

Aim for medium-rare—the center should still be deep red.

Garnish with sliced green onions, toasted sesame seeds, and lime wedges.

Also works with: *Bluefin or yellowfin tuna, skipjack, bonito*

GRILLED SKIN-ON BLUEFISH (page 28)

INGREDIENTS

- Bluefish fillets, scaled with skin on
- Olive oil
- Lemon
- Garlic (powder or fresh)
- Salt and pepper

METHOD

Apply a light coat of olive oil to the fish and season both sides generously with salt, pepper, and garlic.

Get the grill ripping hot. Grill skin-side down over high heat until the skin is crisp and naturally releases from the grates. Close the lid to hold in the heat.

Finish with a squeeze of lemon and fresh herbs.

Also works with: *Mackerel, sardines, salmon – all high-fat oily fish benefit from the same approach*

LINGUINE WITH CLAM SAUCE (page 73)

INGREDIENTS

- Linguine pasta
- 1–2 lbs clams per person
- Olive oil and butter
- Dried parsley and basil
- Minced garlic and finely chopped shallots
- Dry white wine
- Crushed red pepper flakes
- Black pepper
- Lemon juice and zest

METHOD

Cook linguine according to package directions.

While pasta cooks, sauté shallots and garlic in olive oil until golden.

Add white wine, red pepper flakes, clams, and parsley. Cover and simmer until clams open, under 10 minutes. Discard any unopened clams.

Add the pasta directly to the pan with the clams. Toss until pasta absorbs most of the brothy sauce.

Finish with butter, lemon juice, zest, and more parsley.

OVEN-BAKED MACKEREL (page 36)

Courtesy of Youlin and Morin

INGREDIENTS

- Whole or head-off mackerel
- Olive oil
- Garlic powder
- Paprika
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°F. Score the mackerel 3–4 times on each side.

Apply a light coat of olive oil and season generously with garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper.

Bake for 12–15 minutes. Do not overcook—mackerel gets tough quickly.

Finish with fresh parsley and a squeeze of lemon.

Also works with: *Sardines, bluefish fillets, Boston mackerel*

As promised, the recipe for the braised beef and tofu is below!

豆花牛肉 dòu huā niú ròu

Spicy Braised Beef with Tofu (Sichuan Style)

Ingredients

- 2 lb beef rib fingers (or beef short ribs, cut into chunks; or any beef you like.)
- 1 block firm tofu, cut into cubes (could be found in Trade Joe's)
- 3-4 dried red chilies
- 1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns (could be found on a Asia food website, Weee! or Yami)
- 3-4 tbsp spicy hot pot base (could be found on a Asia food website, Weee!)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 slices ginger
- 1-2 green onions, cut into sections
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- salt, to taste
- cooking oil

Optional garnish:

- chopped cilantro
- chopped green onions

Note: Seasonings are flexible. Adjust the amount based on your taste and the saltiness of the ingredients.



dried red chilies

sichuan peppercorn / Hua jiao



Instructions

1. Blanch the beef

Place the beef chunks in a pot with the ginger, whole green onions, and cold water.

Bring to a boil and cook for about 2–3 minutes to remove impurities.

Drain and set the beef aside.

2. Brown the beef

Heat a small amount of oil in a wok or large pan over medium heat.

Add the beef and stir-fry until lightly browned.

Add the dried chilies, Sichuan peppercorns, soy sauce, and hot pot base.

Stir-fry for another 1–2 minutes until fragrant.

3. Braise

Add enough **boiling water** to cover the beef.

Reduce heat and simmer for about **40 minutes**, until the beef becomes tender.

Add the tofu cubes and continue simmering for another **20 minutes**.

4. Serve

Taste and adjust salt if needed.

Garnish with chopped cilantro and green onions before serving.

Serve hot with steamed rice/noodles, normally.

notes for beef rib fingers :

meat between ribs, I didn't see where sale this part directly.

what we did is that, after blanching, remove the meat from the bones.

Highly recommend this part. best for braise

Or,

you could just cook the whole rib, which I would do for saving time.

PAN-FRIED ANCHOVIES (Page 16)

Courtesy of Hunter Palmeri

INGREDIENTS

- Fresh anchovies, cleaned head-on or off
- Flour or cornmeal
- Salt, pepper
- Olive oil

METHOD

Score the fish 3–4 times and season with salt and pepper. Lightly flour the fish making sure the whole thing is covered.

Pan-fry in olive oil 1–2 minutes per side until crisp and golden.

Also works with: *Any small whole fish (smelts, small sardines, mackerel)*

Chimichurri Sauce

- 1 cup parsley
- 2 tbsp oregano
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 lemons + zest
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Blend or finely chop all ingredients and spoon generously over hot fish.

PAN-SEARED SCALLOPS WITH GARLIC BUTTER SAUCE (page 74)

INGREDIENTS

- Scallops (dry-packed preferred)
- Olive oil
- Butter (or bacon grease for extra flavor)
- Garlic (3–4 cloves)
- Lemon juice
- ¼ cup white wine or broth
- Salt
- Fresh parsley (to garnish)

METHOD

Pat the scallops completely dry—this is the key to a proper sear.

Heat pan with oil to medium-high. Sear scallops on the first side without moving them for about 90 seconds, until they naturally release and have a deep golden-brown crust. Flip and sear 60 seconds more. Do not overcook.

Remove scallops from the pan. Add butter to the pan, scraping up any browned bits.

Add garlic, lemon juice, and white wine. Cook for 2 minutes.

Pour the sauce over the scallops. Garnish with fresh parsley.

SHIME SABA (SUSHI-STYLE MACKEREL) (page38)

INGREDIENTS

- Mackerel fillets, skin-on
- Generous amount of salt
- Rice vinegar (enough to submerge fillets)
- Nori sheets
- Soy sauce (for serving)
- Sticky rice (optional, for serving)

METHOD

Generously coat the mackerel fillets with salt and let them rest uncovered in the fridge for a few hours or overnight.

Gently rinse the salt off the fillets and fully submerge them in rice vinegar. Cover with nori. Refrigerate another few hours or overnight.

Remove the fillets, briefly rinse with cold water, and pat dry.

Carefully peel off the skin from a corner—it should come off like a sticker.

Use your fingers or tweezers to remove all pin bones running through the center of the fillet. Run your finger along the flesh to find them all.

Slice thin and serve plain with soy sauce, or over sticky rice.

SMOKED BLUEFISH (page 84)

INGREDIENTS

- Bluefish fillets, scaled with skin on
- Japanese BBQ sauce (e.g., Yakiniku)

METHOD

Marinate the fillets in BBQ sauce for at least a few hours, overnight in the fridge is best.

Set the smoker to 225°F and smoke for 1.5–2 hours until the fish is flaky.

Enjoy as is, on a bagel, or use as the base for bluefish dip.

SMOKED BLUEFISH DIP (page 84)

A real Bonac recipe

INGREDIENTS

- Smoked bluefish (enough for a good pile)
- ¼ cup red onion, coarsely chopped
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 2–3 tbsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp salt

METHOD

Remove the skin from the smoked bluefish and break the meat into pieces.

Pulse onion in a food processor until finely chopped.

Add cream cheese and pulse until blended.

Add fish, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Pulse until evenly mixed.

Serve with crackers, bagel chips, or sliced cucumber.

SMOKED SALMON (NOT LOX) (page 82)

INGREDIENTS

- Skin-on salmon fillets
- Brown sugar (generous)
- Salt (generous)
- Black pepper

METHOD

Generously dry-brine (season) your salmon fillet on all sides and leave it uncovered in the fridge overnight.

Set your smoker to 225°F.

Smoke low and slow until the salmon is flaky but still moist. This may take 1.5–2.5 hours depending on thickness.

Let rest a few minutes before serving.

WHOLE FRIED PORGY (Page 17)

INGREDIENTS

- Whole scaled porgy
- Salt, pepper, garlic powder (or fish seasoning)
- Flour or cornstarch
- Neutral oil (canola or vegetable)

METHOD

Score fish deeply on both sides and generously season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.

Cover the fish completely in flour or cornstarch.

Fry in neutral oil at medium-high heat until the skin is golden and crispy.

Serve with lemon wedges and flaky salt.

Also works with: *Any whole small fish – snapper, sea bream, small bass & rock fish*