

Halibut Baked In Foil with Zucchini and Tomatoes

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Why this recipe works. Cooking halibut en papillote – baking it in a tightly sealed package to steam it in its own juices – is a quick, mess-free way to enhance the fish's mild flavor, and including vegetables in the pouch is a surefire path to an easy and satisfying meal. Using aluminum foil rather than parchment made packet construction simple. For vegetables, we started with zucchini (salted to remove excess moisture), which would cook in the same amount of time as the fish. To give our packets plenty of flavor without overpowering the halibut, we made a tomato "salsa," which added just the right kick. A splash of white wine boosted the flavor even more. The sealed packets needed only 15 to 20 minutes in the oven to steam and baste the fish and soften the vegetables. A final garnish of chopped basil and lemon wedges makes the perfect finish. Cod, haddock, red snapper, and sea bass also work well in this recipe as long as the fillets are 1 to 1 1/2 inches thick. Be sure to open each packet promptly after begging to prevent over cooking.

Ingredients

1 lb. zucchini (2 medium), ends trimmed and sliced crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick rounds

Table salt

1/2 lb. plum tomatoes (2 medium), cored, seeded, and chopped into 1/2-inch pieces (about 1 cup)

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)

1 teaspoon minced fresh oregano leaves

1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Ground black pepper

4 tablespoon vermouth or dry white wine
4 skinless halibut fillets, 1 to 1 1/4 inches thick (about 6 ounces each)
1/4 cup minced fresh basil leaves
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Method

1. Toss zucchini with 1/2 teaspoon salt in large bowl; transfer to colander set over bowl. Let stand until zucchini releases 1 to 2 tablespoons liquid, about 30 minutes. Arrange zucchini on triple layer paper towels; cover with another triple layer paper towels. Firmly press each slice to remove as much liquid as possible. Meanwhile, combine tomatoes, oil, garlic, oregano, red pepper flakes, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper in medium bowl.

2. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Cut eight 12-inch sheets of foil; arrange four flat on counter. Distribute salted zucchini among foil sheets, mounding in center of each. Pour 1 tablespoon vermouth over each mound of vegetables. Pat fish dry with paper towels; season with salt and pepper and place one fillet on top of each vegetable mound. Spoon quarter of tomato mixture over each fillet. Place second square of foil on top of fish; crimp edges together in 1/2-inch fold, then fold over three more times to create a packet about 7 inches square. Place packets on rimmed baking sheet (overlapping slightly if necessary).

3. Bake packets 15 minutes – 20 minutes until halibut registers 140°F. Carefully open foil, allowing steam to escape away from you. Using thin metal spatula, gently slide fish and vegetables onto plate with any accumulated juices; sprinkle with basil. Serve immediately, passing lemon wedges separately.

Notes

Haddock, red snapper, cod, and sea bass also work well in this recipe and those that follow as long as the fillets are 1 to 1 1/4 inches thick. The packets may be assembled several hours

ahead of time and refrigerated until ready to cook. If the packets have been refrigerated for more than 30 minutes, increase the cooking time by 2 minutes. Open each packet promptly after baking to prevent overcooking.

Melissa made in 2019!

Prep

- Total Time: 1 Hour

Source: America's Test Kitchen (4 servings)