

## **204 – BY THE SEA**

Brazilian Coconut Shrimp Kebabs  
Garlic Sesame Halibut  
Snapper in Banana Leaves  
Sesame-Grilled Asparagus Rafts

### **BRAZILIAN COCONUT SHRIMP KEBABS**

Source: How to Grill, pg. 320

Method: Direct

Serves: 4

32 jumbo or extra large shrimp (about 1-1/2 to 2 pounds)  
2 onions  
1 large green bell pepper, plus 1/2 green bell pepper, diced  
1 large orange, yellow, or red bell pepper, plus 1/2 red pepper, diced  
6 cloves garlic, halved  
1 piece (1-inch) fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced into coins  
1 to 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and diced (for hotter kebabs, leave the seeds in)  
1 can (14 ounces) unsweetened coconut milk  
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 teaspoon coarse salt, or more to taste  
1 teaspoon white pepper, or more to taste  
1/3 cup fresh cilantro or parsley  
3 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil for basting (optional)  
Lime wedges, for serving

You'll also need:

8 two-pronged skewers or 16 slender bamboo skewers

Rinse the shrimp under cold running water, then drain and blot dry with paper towels. Peel and devein the shrimp. Cut 1 onion into 8 pieces; break each piece into individual layers. Cut the flesh of the whole bell peppers off the cores, and then cut it into 1-inch triangles. Thread the shrimp onto the skewers, alternating with the onion and bell pepper triangles. Arrange the kebabs in a nonreactive baking dish.

Prepare the marinade. Cut the remaining onion in quarters. Finely chop the garlic, ginger, onion quarters, diced bell peppers, and jalapeno(s) in a food processor. Add the coconut milk, lime juice, oil, salt, and white pepper. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and pepper as necessary. Add the cilantro and pulse a few times just to mix. Don't process the marinade too much after the cilantro is added or it will turn green. Alternatively, puree the ingredients in a blender, again adding the cilantro at the end and blending just to mix. Pour the marinade over the kebabs and let marinate for 1 to 2 hours in the refrigerator, covered. (Don't over-marinate, or the shrimp will toughen.) Turn the kebabs several times to ensure even marinating.

Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. When ready to cook, brush and oil the grill grate.

Place the shrimp kebabs on the hot grate and grill until the shrimp is cooked (it will be firm and white), 2 to 3 minutes per side. Baste the shrimp with the butter, if using, during the last 2 minutes of grilling.

Serve the shrimp at once with lime wedges. Unskewer the kebabs before eating.

## GARLIC SESAME HALIBUT

Source: How to Grill, pg. 280

Method: Direct

Serves: 4

4 halibut fillets (each 6 to 8 ounces)

For the marinade:

6 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon peeled, grated ginger

1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro leaves

1 teaspoon washed, chopped cilantro root, or 1 additional tablespoon cilantro leaves

3 tablespoons sugar

1/4 cup Asian fish sauce or soy sauce, plus more for brushing

3 tablespoons white wine, sake, or dry sherry

3 tablespoons Asian (dark) sesame oil, plus more for brushing (optional)

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

You'll also need:

Fish basket or fish grate; spray oil (optional)

Rinse the fish fillets under cold running water and blot dry with paper towels. Arrange the fillets in a nonreactive baking dish just large enough to hold them.

Prepare the marinade. Pound the garlic, ginger, cilantro leaves and root, if using, and sugar to a paste in a mortar with a pestle. Or puree in a mini chopper or food processor. Work in the fish sauce, sake, sesame oil, salt, and pepper. Spoon the marinade on both sides of the fillets. Cover with plastic wrap and let marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to 1 hour, turning once or twice.

Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. When ready to cook, oil the fish basket, if using, or brush and oil the grill grate. Place the fillets

in the basket; if grilling directly on the grill grate, brush or spray the fillets themselves with oil.

Place the fish or the fish basket on the hot grate. Grill until each side of the fillets is browned and cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Because the fillets tend to be fragile, I don't generally bother with rotating them to apply a crosshatch of grill marks. If grilling directly on the grate, brush the tops of the fillets with oil before gently turning them with a spatula. To test for doneness, press a fillet with your finger; it should break into clean flakes when fully cooked. Another test is to insert a metal skewer in the side of a fillet. When it is done, the skewer will come out very hot to the touch after 20 seconds.

NOTE: To grill a fish fillet on a fish grate, place the grate on top of the regular grate and preheat to high. Oil the fish grate with a folded paper towel dipped in oil, or lift it with tongs and spray with oil. As an added precaution against sticking, brush or spray the fillets themselves with oil. Arrange them on the hot fish grate. Grill the fillets, turning them with a spatula onto a spot on the fish grate not previously occupied by a fillet. Continue grilling until done.

## SNAPPER IN BANANA LEAVES

Source: Adapted from How to Grill, pg. 307

Method: Direct

Serves: 4

1/4 medium onion  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and skewered on a toothpick  
1/2 teaspoon annatto seeds or paste, or 1/2 teaspoon saffron threads  
1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns  
2 whole allspice berries  
2 cloves  
1 piece cinnamon stick (about 1 inch)  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Mexican  
1 bay leaf  
6 tablespoons sour orange juice or lime juice  
1 teaspoon coarse salt  
2 pounds red snapper, cut into uniform 8-ounce portions  
2 to 3 whole banana leaves (enough to make 8 pieces, each 8 by 10 inches)  
2 onion slices, separated into rings  
8 sprigs fresh epazote or cilantro

You'll also need:

Wooden toothpicks

Prepare the spice paste: Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to medium-high. When ready to cook, place the onion quarter and the garlic on the hot grate and grill until lightly browned. (You could also do this in a dry skillet over high heat, or on a baking sheet under the broiler.)

Place the annatto seeds, peppercorns, allspice, cloves, cinnamon, oregano, and bay leaf in a spice mill or coffee grinder and grind to a fine powder. Transfer the mixture to a blender or a food processor and add the sour orange juice, browned onion and garlic, the salt, and 1/4 cup of water. Puree until smooth.

Rinse the fish under cold running water and blot dry with paper towels. Arrange the fish in a nonreactive baking dish and pour the marinade over it,

turning the pieces to coat evenly. Let marinate in the refrigerator, covered, for 1 hour.

Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high. When ready to cook, if using fresh banana leaves, place them on the hot grate and grill until pliable, 10 to 20 seconds. Cut the leaves into 8 pieces, each 8 by 10 inches. Place a piece of banana leaf, dark-side down, on your work surface. Place a piece of fish in the center. Place an onion ring or two and a sprig of epazote on top of the fish.

Wrap up the fish in the banana leaf, completely enclosing it. Secure with toothpicks.

Place the fish packets on the hot grate and grill until the banana leaves are nicely browned and the fish is cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes per side. To test for doneness, insert a metal skewer into a bundle. When the fish is fully cooked the skewer will come out very hot to the touch after 20 seconds. Or unwrap one bundle: the fish will break into clean flakes when pressed with your finger. Serve the fish in the banana leaves.

## SESAME-GRILLED ASPARAGUS RAFTS

Source: How to Grill by Steven Raichlen (Workman Publishing, 2001), PG. 356

Method: Direct grilling

Serves: 4

1 pound asparagus (the stalks shouldn't be too thin)  
2 tablespoons Asian (dark) sesame oil  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 clove garlic, minced  
Coarse (kosher or sea) salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Set up the grill for direct grilling and preheat to high.

Snap off the woody bases of the asparagus and discard. Trim the ends with a knife so the stalks are a uniform length. Skewer 4 or 5 asparagus spears together, using toothpicks or bamboo skewers. (Think of a Huck Finn-type raft!)

In a small bowl, combine the sesame oil, soy sauce, and garlic and stir with a fork to mix. Brush this mixture on the asparagus rafts on both sides. Season the rafts with a little salt and lots of pepper.

When ready to cook, place the rafts on the hot grate and grill until nicely browned on both sides, 2 to 4 minutes per side. Sprinkle the asparagus rafts with the sesame seeds as they grill. You can serve the asparagus as rafts, or unskewered.

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