

## FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Tim Bridgen, aboard *Marionette*

### Smoked mackerel

Fillet very fresh mackerel from whole, without gutting or removing the head or tail. It's easier, as well as avoiding most of the mess. To do this, use a very sharp, flexible, narrow-bladed knife – otherwise known as a filleting knife. Lay the fish on its side and make a vertical cut right across its body just behind its pectoral fin (the one on its side near the head), as deep as the backbone. You'll feel it easily because you're using a sharp, thin-bladed knife – right?

Without changing the position of the knife twist it towards the tail, hold it flat against the backbone, and run it along the backbone until it slides out just above the tail. If you do this smoothly and gently, keeping the knife parallel to the cutting surface, you'll remove a clean, boneless fillet. Do exactly the same on the other side, except you'll need to be gentler and not press down at all, otherwise things get messy.

Make a brine solution of 2 litres of water and one cup of salt, or use clean sea water and half a cup of salt. Put the fillets in the brine and leave for 20 minutes. Rinse them lightly in fresh water, blot them dry, and leave them in a breeze for an hour or more. You want them to look dry and slightly shiny, which means they've formed what's called a pellicule which acts to draw the smoke flavour into the oil in the fish.

Prepare your smoker by sprinkling a handful of soaked fine wood chips onto its bottom, placing a drip tray over those, then putting a wire rack over that. You'll need to buy the wood chips – you can't use pine sawdust from your workshop. I think a good strong oak smoke works best. Lay the fillets on the rack and put the lid on the smoker. You can get portable camping smokers online for £30 and upwards, but otherwise a large biscuit tin or similar works fine, with a few holes in the lid, some tin foil in the bottom as a drip 'tray', and a cake rack or grill pan tray over that.

Then you need a heat source. My smoker cost £40 from Amazon and came with a stand for the smoking tin, a couple of methylated spirits\* burners to put under it, and a starter pack of wood shavings. I only use the meths burners if I'm ashore – on the boat I put the smoking tin on a gas barbecue fixed to the stern rail.

Heat vigorously until smoke starts to come out of the tin and then leave it on the heat for 10–15 minutes. Check progress periodically – you are waiting for the mackerel to look like it does in a good quality

supermarket plastic pack – dark orangey-brown and juicy looking. When done, remove the tray and cool as quickly as possible.

This method also works well for the tuna family, cutting the meat into thick steaks before brining. It's particularly good with the more strongly flavoured, darker fleshed species – bonito, skipjack and mackerel tuna.

\* Usually called denatured alcohol in the US.



## FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Janice Fennymore-White, aboard *Destiny*

### Granny Dubois' French Baguette recipe

- Ingredients**
- 375g (3 cups) strong flour
  - 8g salt
  - 5g instant yeast or 12g fresh yeast
  - 300ml lukewarm water

Mix the flour and salt together in a big bowl (but not the yeast as the salt will kill it and the dough will not rise. Add the yeast to the water. If you're using fresh yeast, follow the instructions that came with it. Mix the flour + salt and the water + yeast together to make a rough, wet mixture. Cover the mixture with cling film and put a tea towel on it. Put it in a warm place and leave to rise for 90 minutes.

After 75 minutes start to heat your oven to its highest setting – mine goes to 230°C – and put a bowl of water inside. Line your baguette tin or oven tray with baking paper and, at 90 minutes, pour the mixture in. A spatula will come in handy as the mixture is really sticky. Bake for 30 minutes and tadaaaa ... ready to eat!

The baguette can also be cooked in a pressure cooker with vent open like a Dutch Oven, though it won't be baguette-shaped. Double the cooking time and turn over halfway through to brown both sides (I put a silicon disk in the bottom to ease turning). This gives a texture more like crumpets, but is still good.

When mixing the dry and wet ingredients you can add sunflower, linseed, sesame or caraway seeds (or a combination) to give additional texture and flavour.



### Nigella's no fuss, no faff coffee ice cream

- Ingredients**
- 300ml (10fl oz) double cream\*
  - 175g (6oz) condensed milk
  - 2 tbsp instant espresso (or 4 tbsp instant coffee) powder and a little hot water to blend)
  - 2 tbsp espresso or coffee liqueur (optional)

Whisk the ingredients together using a hand or electric whisk – NOT a food mixer – until soft peaks form. Then fill an airtight container (or two smaller ones) and freeze for at least six hours, preferably overnight. Enjoy!

Experiment by replacing the coffee with 125g of raspberries, strawberries or blueberries, either folded or whisked in, or desiccated coconut. Our favourite is rum and raisin! For this I soak the raisins in 3tbsp of rum, drain them, whisk the rum into the mixture, and fold the raisins in last.

\* The double cream can be replaced by whipping cream, evaporated milk or coconut cream (for the latter use the same quantity of coconut and condensed milk).



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### Mackerel not fried in oatmeal

Mackerel is an oily, fishy-flavoured fish with a thin, tough skin. It is therefore not going to appeal to anyone who doesn't love fish. This is a shame because it has an extremely high-quality flesh, very closely related to that of its other family members, the tunas. It's also abundant in British (and other) coastal waters for most of the summer.

So how to make it respond to cooking in a way that's more like tuna? Simple – treat it like tuna and don't ever fry it and don't ever coat it in anything. It always needs to be scorched by its cooking, and its partners while cooking can be any combination of garlic, pepper, bay leaf and lemon – nothing else. Forgive me for being so strident, but mackerel's reputation has suffered greatly by so often being fried in porridge oats.

It is so easy to fillet (see Smoked Mackerel, page 50) that I would always do so, except for barbecuing when I would only gut it. My own favourite cooking methods, in order of preference, are:

1. On a beach barbecue, very lightly oiled all over, seasoned, and with two garlic cloves and a bay leaf in the belly cavity.
2. Very, very fresh, under a hot grill with a tiny bit of oil, plenty of black pepper, a little salt and a slice of lemon until they're seriously singed.
3. Baked for a few minutes at the top of a very hot oven, just lightly seasoned. This works particularly well if the baking is done laid on top of some pre-roasted vegetables which have themselves been cooked with olive oil, garlic, lemon and a bay leaf.



Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world, people get together to eat.

Guy Fieri



Pure water is the best of drinks, the Temperance party sing,  
But whom am I that I should have the best of everything?  
Let statesmen revel at the pump, Peers with the pond make free,  
Whisky or beer, or even wine, is good enough for me.

Anon



## FROM THE GALLEY OF ... Jane Eastman, aboard *Pax*

### Pimientos de Padron

- Ingredients**
- pimientos (small green peppers, readily available in continental markets and supermarkets)
  - plenty of olive oil
  - salt (preferably sea salt or other large crystal variety)

Heat the olive oil in a large pan until very hot. Add the peppers (whole, including stalks) and fry for 5 to 10 minutes, turning often, until soft and starting to blister. Drain on paper towel, sprinkle generously with salt and serve immediately.



Pimientos de Padron are a favour starter in southern Galicia, and though most are akin to small bell-peppers in flavour, the occasional one can be extremely hot. Russian roulette with the taste-buds indeed!

