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Pan-Seared Salmon with Three-Citrus Relish

Serves 4 – Medium Difficulty – Total Time: 30 minutes – Hands-on Time: 15 minutes

The color and bright flavors in this citrus relish liven up even the drabbest of winter days.

Three Citrus Relish:

1 pink grapefruit
2 blood oranges
2 tangerines
1 shallot, halved lengthwise and sliced paper thin
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp honey or agave nectar
1 tbsp thinly sliced fresh basil, chives, mint, or parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Pan-Seared Salmon:

4 salmon fillets (each 6 oz/170g)
1 tbsp canola, grapeseed, or peanut oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

For The Relish:

Slice off the tops and bottoms of the grapefruit, blood oranges, and tangerines. Segment the fruit as follows: slice downward, top to bottom, along the curve of the fruit, removing the peel and pith (the white stuff inside the peel) in strips; repeat all around each fruit.

For each citrus fruit, cut out the fruit segments with a sharp knife as follows: carefully slip the knife between the fruit membrane and the segment and gently cut until you reach the middle. Hook under the fruit to gently pop out the segment.

Combine the shallot, oil, vinegar, honey, herbs, and salt and pepper in a non-reactive bowl and toss to evenly coat. Let set at room temperature for at least 15 minutes before serving.

For The Fish:

Heat a large heavy-bottomed pan over high heat. (The pan is heated when you place the fish in and it sizzles loudly.) Liberally season the salmon with oil, salt, and pepper.

Place the fish, skin-side down, in the hot pan and decrease the heat to medium. Do not move the fillets. Cook until well browned and cooked about three-fourths of the way through, about 3 minutes. Turn the fillets and cook until medium-rare (just barely pink in the center), about 3 minutes more. Serve immediately, topped with the relish.

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Recipe Notes:

Cast Iron Skillet - A good-quality, heavy bottomed pan (like a cast iron skillet or stainless steel pan) is key for getting a good sear on the fish.

This is a dish to make in the heart of the winter when citrus is at its best. I like the sour, sweet, earthy mix of these particular citrus but use whatever looks best at the store.

Check out Seafood Watch online for current information about purchasing seafood.

Recipe Within a Recipe: This relish is also fabulous atop delicate greens for a simple salad, with seared shrimp or scallops, or on pan-roasted pork chops.

Takeaways: How to pan-sear fish; how to segment citrus.

The directions for cutting the citrus into segments (a.k.a. supremes) make for jewel-like pieces of fruit. If you don't have the patience or time, you can just carefully peel the fruit (be sure to remove all white pith).

The relish can be made up to 1 day ahead without the herbs and refrigerated in an airtight container until ready to use.

Like meat, salmon and tuna are best cooked medium-rare, which is what the cooking time in this recipe will yield.