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## Heavenly Halibut

By Susie Iventosch

Halibut season just opened March 10, so you may be seeing fresh wild halibut in the markets soon. But, you will also notice a significantly higher price tag than last year's harvest. The is because the International Pacific Halibut Commission has recommended that, due to concern over reduced stock in the halibut population, the governments of Canada and the United States set catch limits 18.9 percent lower than last year.

With the known benefits of eating halibut, many folks will not mind paying higher prices for this season's catch. Rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, halibut provides a range of cardiovascular benefits and improves the ratio of HDL (high density lipoprotein- the good cholesterol) to LDL (bad cholesterol). It is also a good source of magnesium, Vitamin B-12, Vitamin B-6 and folic acid. Omega 3 fatty acids can also lower triglycerides- a kind of fat carried in the blood stream, reduce the risk of certain types of cancer and even fend off both early and late age-related macular degeneration. Halibut is also believed to have properties that fight against Alzheimer's disease.

It seems like one might need a prescription for such a dose of health, but a large helping of cash is all it takes! And, it really is not all that pricey, when compared to sea bass or lobster!

At Diablo Foods in Lafayette, seafood manager Ray Snyder said he is carrying filets of local halibut, and steaks of the thicker and more expensive Alaskan halibut. Local halibut filets are running \$24.99 per pound, while the Alaskan steaks are \$20.99 per pound.

"You cannot tell the difference in flavor," Snyder pointed out. "But the price points on the Alaskan halibut are too high right now to yield filets. The lower limit causes prices to increase, but in the long run, it is a good thing to ensure the fish population is sustainable."

He said the store should have halibut in stock from now through September, but customers can always call ahead to place orders, to ensure getting what they need.

At a restaurant outing a few weeks ago, the menu featured halibut served with roasted red pepper puree, saffron risotto and a black pepper-Parmesan crisp. It sounded so marvelous that my husband and I both ordered it! Were we ever glad we did ... it was divine. I tried replicating it at home for my friend's birthday dinner and we were all very pleased with the results!

With the advent of halibut season, it is perfect timing for you to try this dish at home. The roasted red pepper sauce with a hint of lemon, and saffron risotto accent the mild taste of the halibut beautifully.

For all the information you could ever want about Pacific halibut, from determining the age of your catch to how to cook it in a variety of ways, and an assortment of recipes, please visit: <http://www.iphc.washington.edu/>

Other sources: <http://www.medicinalnature.com/health-benefits-of-halibut/>; <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/benefits-of-halibut-6296.html>



Wild Halibut Photo Susie Iventosch

### Roasted Red Pepper Butter

#### INGREDIENTS

3 large red bell peppers, stem removed, seeded and cut in half  
1 tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice  
4-5 tablespoons butter, at room temperature and cut into small pieces

#### DIRECTIONS

#### INGREDIENTS

3 pounds fresh, wild halibut filet (1/2 pound per person)

1 tablespoon olive oil  
Salt and pepper, to taste

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400F. On a griddle, or a large oven-proof nonstick saute pan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Season the halibut with salt and pepper and put the filets, skin side down, in pan or on griddle. Saute for approximately one minute then flip to other side and cook for another 1-2 minutes. Remove pan/griddle from stove and place in oven. Roast for approximately 4-6 minutes, depending upon filet thickness, until fish is cooked to desired doneness.

#### To Assemble Dish

Pour approximately 1/4 cup of red pepper puree on plate and spoon roughly 1/2 cup risotto over the top. Place halibut filet on top and lay Parmesan crisp on top. Finally, drizzle a little extra red pepper puree over the top and serve at once!

Place red pepper halves in a baking dish lined with parchment paper, and roast at 450 degrees for approximately 20 minutes, or until skins are beginning to char and separate from the meat of the pepper.

Remove from oven and cool peppers in a sealed paper bag. Remove skins and place peppers in a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse until peppers are finely mashed into a puree. Add lemon juice and butter and process until butter is integrated. (You may still see lots of little specks of butter, but don't worry, when you heat the sauce it will integrate completely.) Store sauce in a covered container or sauce pan until ready to serve.

When ready to serve, warm over low heat just until butter is no longer visible and sauce is hot.

Cracked Black Pepper-Parmesan Crisps

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups fresh grated Parmesan cheese

1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper (or more ... as you like)

DIRECTIONS

In a bowl, mix pepper and cheese. Turn out onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Shape into a rectangle about 6 x 8 inches or so. Bake at 400F for about 3-5 minutes, or until bubbly and just slightly beginning to brown. (Watch it closely so as not to burn.) Remove from oven and cool completely on parchment. When cool, break into 2x3 inch (approximately) rectangles. Set aside.

Saffron Risotto

INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 to 4 cups chicken stock, warmed to a simmer

1 cup white wine

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 red onion, finely chopped

1 1/2 cups Arborio rice

1/4 teaspoon salt

Large pinch of saffron

3/4 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated (part for risotto and part for passing at the table)

DIRECTIONS

In a large pot or pan, heat oil and add onion. Cook until onion is translucent, about 3 minutes over medium heat. Add rice and salt to onion and saute until rice is becoming translucent, 2-3 minutes. Add wine and saffron and bring to a simmer, stirring often, until wine is almost absorbed. Then add broth, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring often, but not constantly, until liquid is nearly absorbed. Continue with this process, until all of the broth has been used, or risotto is al dente. Stir in Parmesan and cover and let sit for just a minute or two.

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