

SALMON WITH MISO-FENNEL SALAD

If you've never eaten sous vide salmon, prepare to be wowed. This is not the dry, stringy salmon you've had at wedding buffets; the buttery texture will convert even the finicky. I find this the ideal way to enjoy salmon, but if you prefer a firmer, more traditional texture and opaque color, cook the salmon for the same amount of time at 60°C. In this recipe, the finished salmon gets topped with a sprinkle of *shichimi togarashi*, aka "seven-flavor chile pepper," a Japanese spice blend that typically includes sesame seeds, citrus zest, and seaweed in addition to coarsely ground dried chile. If you cannot find it, a mixture of toasted sesame seeds and cayenne pepper can replace it here, as the idea is to add a kick of flavor, color, and crunchiness to the custardy salmon.

SERVES 4 as a main course | SOUS VIDE COOKING TIME: 20 minutes (or up to 30 minutes) | ACTIVE PREP TIME: 20 minutes, plus 20 minutes to brine

2 cups water

¼ cup kosher salt

1 tablespoon sugar

2 pounds salmon fillet (pin bones removed), skin on or off, cut into 4 equal pieces

1 teaspoon canola or other mild vegetable oil

MISO VINAIGRETTE

1½ tablespoons white miso

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard

1½ teaspoons honey

½ teaspoon peeled, grated fresh ginger

2 tablespoons canola or other mild vegetable oil

½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil

2 fennel bulbs, thinly shaved lengthwise on a mandoline (about 3 cups)

2 cups loosely packed pea shoots (pea greens) or other mild greens (such as mâche or spinach)

1 teaspoon *shichimi togarashi*, or toasted sesame seeds with a pinch of cayenne pepper added

DO-AHEAD STRATEGY

This isn't a dish that I recommend cooking in advance, unless you intend to serve it cold. If you do, remove the fish from the water bath and immerse it in an ice water bath (see page 14) for 15 minutes, or until completely cold, and then store in the bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Preheat your sous vide water bath to 52°C (125.5°F).

While the water is heating, combine the water, salt, and sugar in a wide bowl and stir until the salt and sugar are completely dissolved. Place the salmon pieces in this brine and refrigerate for 20 minutes.

Remove the salmon from the brine and rinse it under cold running water to wash off the excess. Pat the salmon dry with a paper towel. Rub the salmon pieces evenly with the canola oil. Place the salmon in a single layer in a gallon-size freezer-safe ziplock bag and seal using the water displacement method (see page 12).

When the water reaches the target temperature, lower the bagged salmon into the water bath (making sure the bag is fully submerged) and cook for 20 minutes. When the fish is done, it will have turned an opaque pink and will be very delicate, so handle it with care or it will fall apart.

While the fish is cooking, make the miso vinaigrette. In a small bowl, whisk together the miso, lemon juice, mustard, honey, and ginger until blended. Slowly pour in the canola and sesame oils in a thin, steady stream while whisking continuously to emulsify. Set the vinaigrette aside.

When the salmon is ready, gently remove it from the bag and transfer it to a platter or tray. If the salmon pieces were cooked with the skin on and you would like to serve them without the skin, it is extremely easy to remove it now. Simply pull it off, starting at one edge and lifting it off in one piece.

Just before serving, toss the fennel and pea shoots with the vinaigrette, starting with half of the vinaigrette and adding more to taste. If you like salads lightly dressed, you won't want to use all of it.

To serve, arrange the salad on four individual plates, place the warm salmon on top, and sprinkle with the *shichimi togarashi*.

PRO TIP

Brining the salmon before cooking not only seasons it but also prevents the flesh from releasing albumin, the unappetizing-looking white ooze that often besmirches the exterior of cooked salmon. The brine is optional, but it's pretty quick and effortless to include the step, and once you try it with the salmon, you may just want to use it when cooking other types of fish, too.

