

Griddled Sea Bass with Puy lentils and Gremolata

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 55 minutes

Serves 4

You can use pretty much use any piece of fish of your liking to go with these lentils. If you don't have a griddle, use a large frying pan instead. If you choose fish such as cod, haddock or skate, they are better pan fried or roasted, than griddled.

4 x 200g (7 oz) skin-on fillets of sea bass (or bream)

For the lentils

500g (1lb 2oz) Puy lentils

1 large red chilli

3 garlic cloves, peeled

1 sprig each of fresh rosemary and thyme

a bay leaf

4 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for brushing and sprinkling

50g (2oz) bacon lardons (optional)

1 carrot peeled & finely chopped

1 celery stalk finely chopped

1 onion, peeled and finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the gremolata

1 garlic clove, peeled

1 x 15g pack flat leaf parsley, tough stalks removed

Zest of a lemon

First, rinse the lentils in cold water and put them in a saucepan and cover with cold water - make sure they are covered by at least 3cms (1 1/4 in) of water. Add the whole chilli, 3 garlic cloves, sprigs of rosemary and thyme and the bay leaf. Bring the water to the boil & skim off any scum that rises to the surface, reduce to a simmer and cook the lentils for about 30 minutes

or until they are tender.

Meanwhile, lightly score the skin of the fish fillets and set aside. Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a saucepan add the bacon lardons (if using) and cook for 5 minutes. Add the diced carrot, celery & onion and cook together for a further 5 minutes or so or until the vegetables have taken on a little colour.

Pick out the chilli and garlic from the lentils, peel and finely chop both and add to the cooked vegetables (you can discard the rosemary, thyme and bay leaf) with the lentils and any remaining cooking water. Season generously, mix together and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil and keep the lentils warm.

For the gremolata, finely chop the garlic clove and the parsley and mix with the lemon zest. Lightly oil a griddle and heat. Brush the skin of the fish fillets with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place the fish fillets, skin side down, on the hot griddle and cook for 4 minutes on each side. You may need to cook the fish in two batches depending on the size of the griddle.

To serve, spoon a pile of lentils onto four warmed plates, place a cooked fish fillet on top of each one and sprinkle with the gremolata and a little extra olive oil.