

CEDAR-PLANK SALMON

BY **CONNIE FAIRBANKS**

(A recipe from her book, **SCRATCH THAT™**, Seasonal Menus and Perfect Pairings)

“What’s for dinner tonight?”

After a 12-hour, non-stop day, these are the last words you want to hear, or ask. I’m with you, and I hope to solve this dilemma for you. How? Here are some suggestions:

Every Sunday night, plan the dinner meals—your **“Anytime Menu”**—for the week. Write them down on one sheet of paper. With the sheet with you, shop once for the week.

To give you a jumpstart on menu planning, try the Anytime Menu below. In this issue, I will teach you how to make Cedar-Plank Salmon.

What **“Do Aheads”** can you do the night before shopping and each time you plan to cook? Spending five minutes on these tasks will save you hours of frustration. Read my suggested Do Aheads for the Anytime Menu below, after the recipe. Read the **“Connie’s Notes”** section for more tips.

Anytime Menu:

Melon with Prosciutto and Lime
Cedar-Plank Salmon
Grilled Sweet Potatoes and Asparagus
Sliced Plums and Drunken Goat Cheese from Spain
Pinot Noir



Cedar-Plank Salmon

Ingredients:

Four 5-ounce salmon fillets, bones carefully removed
Untreated cedar shingles

Spice Rub:

1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
1 teaspoon dried tarragon
1 teaspoon dried basil



Cedar Shingles

Soak the shingles in a large rectangular cookie sheet for at least six hours; weight them down with the wine bottle.

Combine all the spice rub ingredients. Store in a resealable container.

Place the salmon fillets on a platter and sprinkle approximately 1 teaspoon rub on each fillet, covering the surface. Let the salmon sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes.

Preheat a gas grill or prepare a charcoal fire.

Place the salmon on the wet shingles and grill at medium heat with the grill lid closed. Grill for approximately 10-12 minutes for medium rare. Remove the salmon from the shingles and let them rest for approximately 5 minutes before serving. Discard the charred shingles.

Serves 4. Makes ¼ cup rub.

Do Ahead:

Soak cedar planks in water all day. Weigh them down with the wine bottle.
 Make the rub for the salmon fillets. You can save the unused portion for future meals.
 Prepare the sweet potatoes, save them in packets and refrigerate.
 Prepare the asparagus and refrigerate.
 Cut up the ripe melon and refrigerate.

Connie's Notes:

Untreated cedar shingles can be purchased very inexpensively at a specialty lumber yard. The cedar infusion smells and tastes great with salmon. Your neighbors will love it, too.

When you are doing your weekly shopping, look for seasonal produce first.

Learn about cheese from your local cheese market. Ask questions and let them know how you plan to pair and eat their cheeses. Buy only the small amount you need. Eat like Europeans and have fruit and cheese for dessert.

Before grilling, do a quick check to make sure all of the bones have been removed from the salmon fillets. A small pair of tweezers does the trick.

Salmon tastes best if it is cooked medium rare. It will continue cooking after you take it off the grill. No one likes overcooked, dried out salmon.

Enlist your family and friends to help you. Someone else can set the table, pour the water glasses, get out the wine glasses and serving platters, and pour that glass of wine for you.

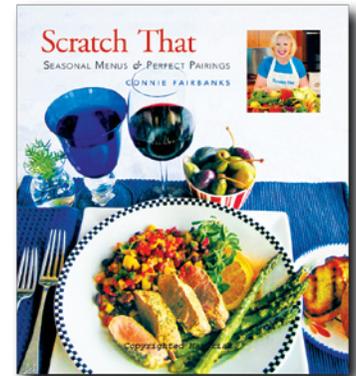
On Wine and Beer

Drink what you like, but you can't go wrong with pinot noir ("*pea-know nwahr*") with almost any meal.

Browse around your small neighborhood wine shop. Tell your wine guy your budget and what you are making, and let him suggest wines for you.

At your favorite restaurants, talk to the sommeliers ("*saw-muh-lyays*"), the highly trained wine stewards, and view their extensive wine lists. The best way to learn about wine is to jump in and ask questions.

Enjoy wine. Make time to enjoy a nice glass of wine. Drink wine while the salmon is cooking, or, better yet, when you walk in the door from work.



SCRATCHTHAT™ Seasonal Menus and Perfect Pairings

by Connie Fairbanks. C&K Press
 February 2007. \$29.95 Paperback.
 ISBN-10: 0979023408. ISBN-13: 978-0979023408.

- CF

Photos on this page reprinted
 with permission from C&K Press

Connie Fairbanks is the author of SCRATCH THAT™, Seasonal Menus and Perfect Pairings.

Scratch That™ is written by a home chef for home chefs. It is organized into 18 seasonal menus with wine pairings, with over 110 color photos from around the world. All recipes are made from scratch with minimal cans, bottles, tubs, and tubes. The recipes are easy to follow, each of which are mostly contained in single pages for ease.

You can purchase her book, SCRATCH THAT™, Seasonal Menus and Perfect Pairings at local bookstores, Amazon or at her website, www.ConnieFairbanks.com. Visit her blog, W for weekly updates.



CONNIE FAIRBANKS