

Saffron Cured Wild Sea Trout with Spiced Aubergine, Soft Quails Eggs, Caperberries and Beetroot Dressing

This is a light, summery dish and most of the elements can be prepared well in advance.

Wild sea trout is in season throughout the spring and summer months and is similar in colour, flavour and taste to wild salmon but without the prohibitive price. Ask your fish monger to pin bone the fish for you. Quails eggs are available at most good supermarkets but if you can't get hold of them hens eggs would be fine.

Serves 4 as a Tapa:

400g wild sea trout (or salmon)

For the cure;

50g sea salt

100g caster sugar

pinch of saffron

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

1 aubergine – diced small

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

½ teaspoon ground cumin

50ml olive oil

6 quails eggs or 4 hens eggs

12 caperberries

1 beetroot

50g sugar

50ml red wine

50ml red wine vinegar

fresh basil leaves

For the cure, mix all the ingredients in a bowl with a splash of water. Spread half of the mixture on a tray and put the trout skin side down on top ensuring all of the fish is well coated, then cover the top of the fish with the remaining cure. Cling film the tray tightly and refrigerate for forty eight hours turning the fish after twenty four hours.

Clean the beetroot and place in a saucepan with the sugar, red wine and red wine vinegar and enough water to cover the beetroot, cook on a medium heat for around one hour or until soft when pierced with a knife. When cool strain the liquid and set aside. Peel the beetroot and dice very small. Put 50ml of the strained liquid into a bowl with a splash of red wine vinegar and whisk in 100ml of olive oil, season and add the diced beetroot.

For the aubergine heat a frying pan until medium hot and add ½ of the olive oil followed by ½ of the diced aubergine. Cook for two minutes and then add ½ of the paprika and cumin, stir and cook for another three minutes or until lightly caramelized. Place in a colander and repeat with the remaining aubergine. Season and set aside.

Bring a pan of water to a rolling boil and have an ice bath ready, put the quails eggs carefully in the boiling water, cook for two minutes forty five seconds and plunge into the iced water. Leave to cool for a few minutes and carefully peel.

Carve five or six slices of sea trout per person and arrange on plates. Spoon on the aubergine and add three caperberries and three halves of quails egg to each plate. Spoon over the beetroot dressing and finish with fresh basil leaves.