



Salmon en croûte

A historic dish that dates to Tudor England, salmon in pastry is definitely a celebratory meal to crow about. 2012 Guest Author Marilyn Simonds writes, “It’s more delicate than Beef Wellington, and a bit fussy to prepare but not difficult. I like it because I can make it ahead and refrigerate the individual packets or freeze them to cook for unexpected guests.” Marilyn adapted the recipe from Erin Clarke’s website, *Well-plated*, where, she says, “the recipes always work and are consistently delicious.”

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp butter
- ½ Tbsp Dijon mustard
- Zest of 1 small lemon (less than 1 tsp)
- ¼ TSP plus ½ TSP kosher salt
- ¼ TSP plus ¼ TSP black pepper
- ½ TSP dried thyme
- 2 TSP extra virgin olive oil
- 4 CUPS fresh baby spinach, stemmed
- 2 CLOVES garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 LARGE egg yolk plus 1 tsp water for egg wash
- 1 SHEET frozen puff pastry, thawed in the refrigerator
- 2 SIX OZ salmon fillets with the skin removed

SERVES 2 (RECIPE DOUBLES, TRIPLES, OR QUADRUPLES WELL)

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Leave the salmon in the refrigerator until time to wrap.

Melt the butter in a small bowl or saucepan. Stir in the Dijon, lemon zest, ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a large, nonstick skillet. Add the spinach and cook until it wilts, about 1 minute. Stir in the garlic, thyme, and ¼ tsp pepper. Remove from heat and stir in 1/2 tsp salt and grated Parmesan. (If you add salt while the spinach is wilting, it releases liquid into the pan, creating a soggy mess.) Set aside to cool.

In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg yolk with 1 tsp water for the egg wash. Set aside.

On a lightly floured surface, roll a sheet of puff pastry to a 12x14-inch rectangle. With a sharp knife, cut the puff pastry in half crosswise to create two 12x7-inch rectangles.

Remove the salmon fillets from the refrigerator. Brush the top of one fillet with half the butter mixture, then place it, butter-side down, lengthwise in the center of one piece of puff pastry. Spoon on half the cooled spinach.

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Salmon en crouete

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Working from the short side of the fillet, fold one side of the puff pastry over the fish towards the centre, half covering it. Brush the top of the flap with egg wash. Fold the opposite side of the pastry towards the centre, overlapping the first flap slightly. Brush the top with egg wash. Then fold the long sides toward the centre, one at a time, brushing with egg wash in between. Don't stress over the order: as long as the salmon is covered and the pastry well sealed, it will look and taste great. Carefully turn the salmon over, fold-side down, and transfer the packet to the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the second fillet.

With a sharp knife, score the tops of the packets with shallow, diagonal lines in opposite directions to create a crosshatch pattern.

TO MAKE AHEAD: You can prepare the salmon en crouete to this stage up to a day ahead. Store in the refrigerator. When you're ready to bake the salmon, bring it to room temperature and carry on with the recipe.

TO FREEZE: Make the salmon to this stage. Place the packets on a baking sheet in the freezer until solid, then store in individual airtight freezer bags for up to 3 months. To cook the salmon, remove from the bag, place on a baking sheet, and let stand at room temperature for 2-3 hours before continuing with the recipe.

Brush the tops of the puff pastry with egg wash.

Bake at 400°F until the pastry is golden brown, about 20-25 minutes. After 10 minutes, lay broccoli or asparagus (brushed with olive oil and sprinkled with salt and pepper) on the baking sheet alongside the salmon packets. The fish and vegetables will all be done at the same time. Serve together, allowing the salmon to rest a few minutes before cutting into the packet.

LEFTOVERS: Store in the refrigerator for up to two days. To serve, let the salmon come to room temperature, then reheat in a 375°F oven for about 10 minutes until warmed through. Reheating in a microwave will make the pastry soggy and chewy.

