

FRESH CATCH

Celebrate summer's arrival with a seasonal seafood recipe from **Barton Seaver**, paired with expert fish-buying tips from **Santi Zabaleta**



Barton Seaver is a Washington, D.C.–based chef and National Geographic Fellow known for his efforts to restore our relationship with the ocean. Here he shares a recipe from his first cookbook, *For Cod and Country*, hitting bookstores this month.

“Barramundi is a great substitute for the not-always-available and usually-not-sustainable snapper,” says Seaver. “It has the same thin skin, which crisps nicely in the pan, and a similar meaty texture and mild sweetness. Here, I pair it with a simple rice pilaf enlivened with scallions.”

Barramundi with Toasted Almond Butter and Basmati Pilaf



Photography and Styling by Isa Salazar

Serves 4

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing fillets
 1½ cups basmati rice
 3 cups water
 Salt
 3 tablespoons slivered almonds
 3 tablespoons butter, softened
 1 teaspoon prepared horseradish
 1 clove garlic, finely grated on a Microplane or very finely minced
 ½ tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 Four 5-ounce portions skin-on barramundi fillet, brined (*click below for how to brine*)
 1 bunch scallions, chopped

For the pilaf, heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Add the rice and cook, stirring constantly, until the rice is golden brown and has a rich, nutty aroma. Add the water and bring to a simmer. Season with salt to taste and reduce the heat to low. Cover and let cook until all the water is absorbed, about 15 minutes.

Preheat the broiler.

For the almond butter, toast the almonds in a small, dry sauté pan over medium heat. This should take 3 to 4 minutes—watch closely! Continuously shake the pan so the nuts brown evenly all over. When they are golden brown (a little uneven color is OK here), place them in a small bowl and add the butter, horseradish, garlic, parsley, and a pinch of salt. Mix to incorporate and set aside.

For the barramundi, place each of the fillets in an ovenproof pan with the skin side up. Brush the skin of each fillet with a little bit of oil and broil for about 7 minutes. The skin should begin to blister and crisp as the flesh cooks evenly. Pull it from the oven just before the fillets are

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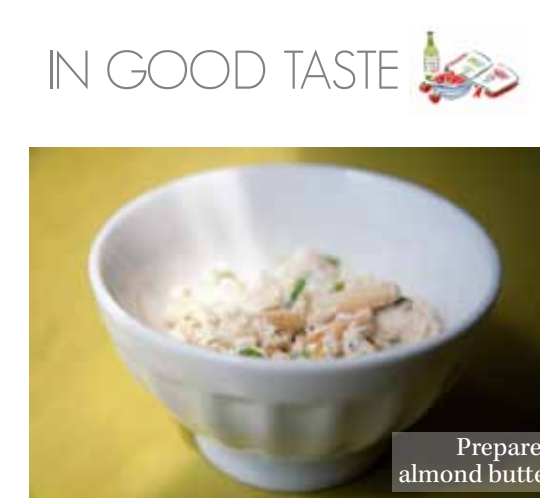
Flat-leaf parsley, scallions, and basmati rice



Prepped ingredients



Grated garlic



Prepared almond butter

The almond butter pairs nicely with all kinds of fish



(We substituted fresh red snapper from Santi's A&H Gourmet and Seafood Market for the barramundi called for in the recipe.)

Fish brine

We asked Santi Zabaleta—fishmonger and former executive chef at La Taberna del Alabardero in D.C.—to lend us tips on everything fishy. If you're in the D.C. area, be sure to visit his neighborhood grocery, A&H Gourmet and Seafood Market, where you'll find impeccably fresh fish, delectable specialty foods from Spain and Portugal, and great cooking advice from the friendly guys behind the counter. Not to mention you'll be pleasantly surprised by the prices...

- 1. What are a couple of good rules to follow when purchasing fish?** If you enjoy seafood, find a local fishmonger—someone you can talk to and trust. A fishmonger can offer you specialty advice on choice seafood cuts and can direct you to what's best that day, that season. If you're on your own, however, look for fish meat that's firm and has a nice shine, not a dull look.
- 2. How should fresh fish smell?** It shouldn't smell fishy; fish should smell like the ocean!
- 3. Sometimes there are stray bones found in fish fillets. What's a good method to remove them?** Tweezers work well, though I recommend cooking fish on the bone or whole—that's where the flavor is.
- 4. Is it OK to leave the skin on while cooking fish?** In most cases, yes. It helps keep the fillet intact, preventing it from flaking apart.
- 5. What's your favorite fish to eat?** Bacalao (salted cod), which is typical to Northern Spain.

BARTON LIKES TO USE...

"Knives break. Spend the money on a sharpening stone and invest some time on a class. Learn how to sharpen that \$40 knife and it will be with you for a long, long time."

—Barton Seaver



Shun DM0708 Combination Whetstone Knife Sharpener: \$69.95; Amazon.com

eco



Rustic Cutting Board: \$75; Delia Sophia's Handmade Wood Cutting Boards



Bar Mop Towels: \$7.95 (set of 4); Sur La Table



SANTI LIKES TO USE...



12 Inch Brushed Steel Paella Pan: \$19.56; Spanish Feast

"A paella pan is a great tool for cooking rice-based seafood dishes. It captures the flavor of the seafood and it's great for feeding large groups of people."

—Santi Zabaleta

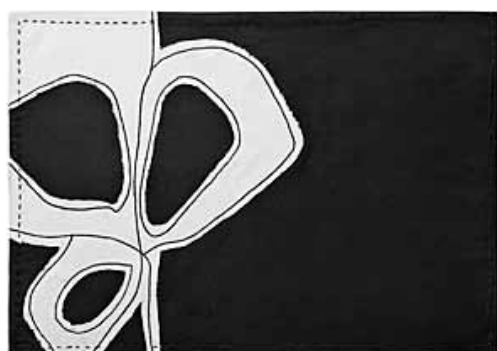


Fish Bone Tweezers by Global: \$42.95; Cooking.com



Crismona Extra Virgin Olive Oil: \$14.99; Spanish Feast

LONNY SUGGESTS...



Diane von Furstenberg Miro Applique Oblong Placemat in Black: \$24.99; Bloomingdale's



Tabarka Dinner Plate: \$45.86 (set of 4); Restaurant Bar Furniture

"A reliable kitchen timer is essential while cooking. We love this timer by Bengt Ek Design."



Bengt Ek Egg Timer: \$25.27; Scandinavian Design Center

STUBEN