

Whole Poached Salmon

Roxanne Fox

1 whole salmon (8 lbs. head and tail on) cleaned, gutted, and scaled
Court-Bouillon (recipe follows). If you have a smaller salmon (5-7 lbs.) use half the amounts.
Dill Sauce (recipe below)
Extra lemons and a few capers for garnish.

Court-Bouillon

2 carrots, thick sliced	½ bunch parsley
2 celery stalks, thick sliced	2-3 bay leaves
1 leek (white, light green part only) or onion, washed and sliced	¼ t whole peppercorns
1 lemon, sliced ¼ inch	1 T course salt
	Enough water to cover the fish

Fill a very large fish poacher or roaster $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water. Your pan needs to be big enough to hold the fish and deep enough so the fish will be completely covered with water. If the salmon is larger than your pan (which is often the case), you can cut the fish in half vertically and put it back together after it is cooked decorating it with lemon slices or sauce to hide the seem. A large roaster works well for this method, and you can cook the entire fish at one time.

Place Court-Bouillon ingredients in the fish pan, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, rinse the fish thoroughly under cold water and pat dry. Cut a double thickness of cheesecloth about 8 inches longer than the salmon and wide enough to wrap around the fish. Place the salmon on the cheesecloth and wrap it around the salmon. Twist the ends together. Using the ends of the cloth as handles, lower the fish into the simmering bouillon, adding water if necessary to cover the fish. Set the pan over two burners on the stove. Bring just barely to a boil. Then turn down the heat and cook the salmon at a very low simmer. DO NOT boil. If the salmon continues to float half way through the cooking time, gently roll it over.

The fish is fully cooked when its internal temperature is 135 degrees. It is difficult to say exactly how long you will need to cook the fish. Use an instant read thermometer at the thickest part of the flesh near the dorsal fin. If you like your salmon rare to medium, take it out at 200 – 250 degrees. Different areas of the fish will be cooked at different degrees of doneness.

When the fish is done, or almost done, remove the pan from the heat and let the fish cool in the liquid. You can add cold water or ice to cool it down more quickly, so it doesn't over-cook. You can also set the pan in an ice bath. Watch the temperature of the fish with the thermometer. The fish will be moister if cooled in liquid. It really all depends on how you like your fish as to how long it cooks in the liquid and the cooling process.

When cool enough to handle, remove the fish to a clean work surface and unwrap it. If you used a pan with a rack, turn it over so the rack side is facing up. Skin the fish and remove the dark surface fat unless you live in Florida and want your fish to look like it has a tan. Leave the head and tail on for presentation or remove them if you have squeamish guests. Using the cheesecloth for support, flip the fish over onto a serving platter and skin the other side.

Decorate the salmon with a little sauce in the seam if you cut the fish. Top with some lemon slices and sprinkle with a few capers. You can also bone the fish after it is cooked and put the two halves back together.

Dill Sauce

1 C plain yogurt

1 T Dijon mustard

2 T snipped dill

Combine well and refrigerate. Serve in a bowl alongside the fish

(Serves 10 – 12)