

Bon Appetit

Whole Branzino Roasted in Salt

BY BRUCE AIDELLS AND NANCY OAKES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PORNCHAI MITTONGTARE

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Ingredients

4 SERVINGS

FISH

	1
3-pound box coarse kosher salt	
	5
(or more) large egg whites	
	2
1-to 1 1/2-pound whole branzino, loup de mer, or sea bass*, gutted	
	8
fresh parsley sprigs	
	2
fresh thyme sprigs	
	4
thin lemon slices	
SALSA VERDE	
	1
lemon	
	1
1/4 cup finely diced celery	
	1
1/4 cup finely diced cucumber	
	1
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley	
	1
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil	
	2
tablespoons drained small capers	
	2
tablespoons sliced pitted brine-cured green olives (such as picholine)	
	3
cups arugula	

Preparation

FISH

Step 1

Preheat oven to 400°F. Stir salt and 5 egg whites in large bowl, adding more egg whites as needed to form grainy paste. Press 1/4-inch layer of salt mixture (large enough to hold both fish) onto large rimmed baking sheet. Stuff cavity of each whole fish with half of herb sprigs and lemon slices. Place fish atop salt mixture on baking sheet. Pack remaining salt mixture over fish to enclose completely. Roast until thermometer inserted into thickest part of fish registers 135°F, about 20 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes.

SALSA VERDE

Step 2

Using small sharp knife, remove peel and white pith from lemon. Working over bowl, cut between membranes to release segments. Cut each segment into 3 pieces. Add lemon pieces and next 6 ingredients to bowl.

Step 3

Using back of large spoon, gently crack open salt crust on fish. Lift and discard salt layer. Pull skin from top of 1 fish. Carefully lift top fillet from bones and transfer to plate. Lift and discard bones. Gently lift second fillet from skin and transfer to second plate. Repeat with second fish for a total of 4 plates.

Step 4

Spoon salsa verde over fish, leaving juices in bowl. Add arugula to bowl; toss to coat. Divide among plates.