

Salmon Rillettes – For Entree!

 cicadabay.com/oliveskitchen/salmon-rillettes-entree/

December 4, 2017

Christmas Cake and Christmas Pudding

Entrees from previous blog posts

Salmon Rillettes – Rillettes aux Deux Saumons

These are superb, so moreish. The recipe is attributed to the acclaimed American chef, Thomas Keller, via his restaurant Bouchon Bakery. The other good news is that they are also relatively easy to make and can be made a day or two ahead; in fact the taste improves with extra time. Serve them in individual pots or in a largish container to be passed around the table.

We first heard about the recipe on television, when someone was speaking about one of the most delicious things they had ever eaten. We managed to track down the recipe via the Internet.

This link provides clear instructions and has very useful photos as guidance:

<http://www.homesweetjones.com/2015/02/thomas-kellers-potted-salmon-rillettes/>

We use the same recipe, with some adaptations.

One of our changes is to gently microwave the fresh salmon rather than steaming or poaching it. Do this carefully on low power, moving the fillets around a couple of times. The advantage of the microwave is the gentle cooking and being able to retain the juices.

Another change we make is to mix the butter into the shallot mixture as if making abeurre blanc. The residual heat from the shallots makes it easier to emulsify the butter.

Finally, we have used smaller pots and have not used clarified butter to seal.

(One experiment we have not yet tried is to add a small amount of white wine, and perhaps some tarragon, to the shallots – as in making a beurre blanc – and allow it to reduce during the sautéing process.)

The ingredients below make about 800 ml rillettes, suitable for a couple of large jars or 8 ramekins of 100 ml or 16×50 ml containers.

Equipment: Glass baking dish. Ramekins or jars.

Degree of difficulty: 3/5 (moderately difficult) as care is needed not to over cook the shallots, not to over cook the fresh salmon and not to over melt the butter.

Ingredients

- 450 g (very) fresh salmon fillet, skin and bones removed, trimmed of fat and very dark flesh
- 2 tbsps Pernod (though brandy or similar might work too)

- salt and white pepper to taste (black pepper is fine if you don't mind the specks)
- 200 g unsalted butter in total
- 200 g smoked salmon in a chunk or slices
- 1/2 cup shallots, minced
- 1 tbsp crème fraiche (or dash each of cream and sour cream combined)
- 1 tbsp high-quality extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 ½ tbsps fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- extra salt and white pepper
- (optional) 1 tbsp fresh chives, finely chopped
- (optional) extra chives for garnish
- (optional) clarified butter for sealing

Instructions:

Take the butter from the fridge and chop into chunks or cubes to help them soften as they reach room temperature.

Place the salmon fillets in a glass baking dish, preferably with a lid, suitable for microwaving (or for steaming if you use that method). Pour over the Pernod, add ½ to 1 teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon white pepper. Toss, refrigerate covered for 40 minutes, turning a couple of times. Remove from the fridge for another 20 minutes.

Then allow another 15 minutes to finish off the rillettes.

Cut the smoked salmon into 1 cm dice (or chunks).

The marinating salmon fillets need to be microwaved or steamed to the point where they are rare to medium rare. Using the microwave, cook the fillets along with the Pernod, covered for two minutes on half power; remove and switch the fillets all around in the dish. Repeat on half power for another minute or so. Repeat if necessary. Don't be concerned if they break up; anything that is on the way to being beyond medium rare can be removed temporarily. You want the salmon to barely start breaking up. When all has reached that point, use a spoon or fork to break it all into chunks and set aside.

(Alternatively, using a steamer, set up a pot with a steamer rack and bring the water in the bottom to a simmer. Add the salmon and steam gently until medium-rare, about 8 minutes. If you don't have a microwave or steamer, you can poach the salmon but you will lose some juices.)

Meanwhile, melt 1 tablespoon butter (about 25 g) in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallots, season with 1/4 teaspoon salt, and sauté, stirring, until softened, about 4 to 5 minutes. Don't allow them to brown.

Remove shallots from the heat; if too hot place saucepan on a cold surface or into some cold water. First, add crème fraiche and stir to combine. Without allowing it to separate, as if you are making a beurre blanc, add the remaining cubes of butter and quickly stir into the shallot mixture until smooth and creamy. Set aside.

Using the bowl in which the salmon was microwaved (or steamed), combine salmon chunks, diced smoked salmon, olive oil, egg yolks, lemon juice, and chives. Season with salt and white pepper. Finally, fold in the shallot-butter mixture and fold through without breaking up the salmon pieces.

Transfer the salmon mixture to ramekins, jars or pots. (If you are going to seal them with clarified butter, leave 1 cm of space at the top of each.) Refrigerate, covered until needed. (If desired, once the rillettes are chilled, seal each pot with some clarified butter.)

For individual serves, garnish the small pots with chives.



As a shared item, serve from a large pot or jar.

Serve with toasted baguette, crusty bread or crackers or cucumber slices.

As they are rather rich, for Christmas, we will serve them in 50 ml shot glasses and accompany them with slices of toasted Turkish bread and a simple salad of different coloured cherry tomatoes.