

Snapper

Snapper is such a versatile, friendly fish. He's like that really friendly, funny guy at work who everyone loves talking to. He is completely without pretense and easy to handle. If you're interested in cooking whole fish, and haven't before, baby snapper is a good place to start.

- SEASON** Caught along the coast from South Australia to Victoria between September and March.
- FRESH FILLET** The fillet flesh is pale-grey, deep and beautiful, with a dark, almost ruby bloodline.
- TEXTURE WHEN COOKED** Snapper is a classic user-friendly fish with a flake that's gentle to the bite, but which holds its own with various types of cooking.
- FLAVOUR** Strikes a balanced flavour that sits comfortably between sweetness and saltiness, with a fresh, clean finish.
- COOKING** A very adaptable fish. Baby snapper is lovely whole; fillets love to be panfried, poached or deep-fried.
- WINE** A wine with some complexity on the palate would get along nicely with the balanced flavour of snapper. A pinot gris from the Mornington Peninsula or perhaps a viognier from Heathcote would do well.
- BEER** Put a bottle of conditioned ale with this fellow as you kick back with some coriander and coconut rice. He would enjoy the fruity yeastiness.




Whole baked baby snapper

INGREDIENTS

2 baby snapper, whole
1 lemon, sliced into 5mm rounds
salt and pepper
2 tbsp olive oil

METHOD

 Heat oven to 180C. Place the lemon slices in the cavity of the snapper, season the fish with salt and pepper then slice diagonally across the flesh. Wrap in greaseproof paper then foil and place on a tray in the oven for 12 minutes. Open the foil and paper and continue to cook for a further 10 minutes. Check it with a cooking thermometer: at 65C inside it's perfect. Serve with lots of lemon, bread and salad.

Serves 2



Panfried snapper with coriander dressing and coconut rice

INGREDIENTS

2 snapper fillets
olive oil
salt
pepper

Coriander dressing

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
1 small red chilli, finely chopped
2 tbsp olive oil
1 bunch coriander leaves, roughly chopped
juice of 1 lime

Coconut rice

200ml coconut milk
250ml water
400g Basmati rice, washed

METHOD

- Heat a large frypan. Brush the fillets with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place the fillets, skin-side down, and cook for 4 minutes then turn and cook for a further minute.
- For the coriander dressing** Put chilli, garlic and ginger in a saucepan and cook gently until soft. Take off the heat and add the coriander. Stir the leaves through and pour the lime juice over the ingredients. Spoon over the fish and serve with the rice.
- For the coconut rice** Place the rice in a saucepan with the water and coconut milk. Bring to the boil and then immediately turn down and simmer for 5 minutes. Place the lid on the pan and leave to continue cooking for 15 minutes. Take off the heat and fluff the rice with a fork. Serve immediately.

Serves 2

Snapper's bedfellows

SEASONAL SIX

Here are six warm weather vegetables that are fun to put alongside this lovely fish:

Peas Boil peas for 4 minutes and serve simply – nothing added, their seasonal sweetness will shine through

Green beans Again, keep it simple with beans that have been boiled for a few minutes and then tossed gently with olive oil and sea salt

Cos lettuce Make a simple salad of cos, croutons and fresh herbs dressed with lemon juice and olive oil

Cucumber Peel and slice the cucumber and mix with black olives, preserved lemon and rocket leaves

Sweetcorn Just enjoy it simply boiled or grilled

Savoy cabbage Thinly slice the cabbage and combine with some grated carrot, chopped parsley, mayonnaise, red-wine vinegar and salt and pepper

SWIMMING THROUGH THE GUIDE

Here are six recipes from the guide that also work well with snapper:

- Crispy skinned with prawn and potato crush **Page 26**
- Roasted whole with blistered cherry tomatoes **Page 58**
- Panfried with zucchini and mint salad and chilli vinaigrette **Page 122**
- Panfried with green mayonnaise and mashed potato **Page 132**
- Steamed soy and ginger snapper with sesame rice **Page 146**
- Grilled with green olive and white bean mash **Page 206**

Grilled snapper with asparagus

INGREDIENTS

2 snapper fillets
1 bunch asparagus
butter
salt
pepper
olive oil

METHOD

- Heat a grill or grill-pan until very hot. Brush the fillets with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place skin up under a grill or skin down in a frypan. Cook for 4 minutes then turn to cook for 1 minute more.
- Boil the asparagus for 4 minutes and then drain and toss with melted butter. Season if you wish, but try it first because asparagus doesn't need too many added extras.

Serves 2

MARINADE

Soy chilli marinade

INGREDIENTS

1 small red chilli, finely chopped
1 tbsp fish sauce
2 tbsp lime juice
2 tbsp soy sauce
½ cup vegetable oil

METHOD

- Combine all the ingredients and allow the fish to marinate for at least 1 hour.

SALAD

Quick chickpea salad

INGREDIENTS

1 x 400g can chickpeas
2 sticks celery, thinly sliced
½ bunch parsley, roughly chopped
½ bunch basil, roughly chopped
juice of 1 lemon
olive oil
salt
pepper

METHOD

- Rinse the chickpeas and then put all the ingredients in a salad bowl and mix together well.

BUTTER

Anchovy butter

INGREDIENTS

6 anchovy fillets
125g unsalted butter
1 tbsp lemon juice

METHOD

- Put all the ingredients in a food processor and whiz together until combined.