

Caramelized Hickory Planked Salmon

Spicy Crawfish Slaw, Pimiento Cheese Hush Puppies,
Roasted Shallot Aioli

(Serves 6)

Slaw:

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| 2 cups | Green Cabbage, shredded |
| 1 cup | Red Cabbage, shredded |
| ½ cup | Carrot, peeled and shredded |
| 1 | Red Bell Pepper, cut into thin strips |
| 1 | Yellow Bell Pepper, cut into thin strips |
| 1 lb | Crawfish Tail Meat |
| ½ cup | Sherry Vinegar |
| ¼ cup | Sugar |
| ¼ cup | Tomato Paste |
| 1 cup | Mayonnaise |
| 1 tsp | Cayenne Pepper |
| | Salt |

Hush Puppies:

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| 1 | Yellow Onion, chopped |
| 1 cup | Yellow Cornmeal |
| 1½ cups | Flour |
| 2 Tbs | Baking Powder |
| 2 tsp | Onion Powder |
| ½ cup | Sugar |
| 1 cup | Cheddar Cheese, shredded |
| ½ cup | Pimientos, diced |
| 1 | Jalapeños, seeded and finely diced |
| 2 | Eggs |
| ½ cup | Buttermilk |
| | Vegetable Oil |
| | Salt and Fresh Ground Black Pepper |

“For a while it was all the rage to serve food on a cedar plank, but we didn’t think cedar was a flavor we wanted to add to our food (have you ever heard of cedar-smoked anything?), so we decided to use a hickory plank. At the time, we had to go to the lumberyard and have untreated hickory planks custom cut for us. You should have seen the lumberman’s face! Now you can get hickory wood grilling planks at www.maine-grilling-woods.com. We branded the wood with our logo as a nice surprise when the guest was finished eating and it became a huge hit. Of course, the hush pups are a huge hit with or without the fancy presentation.”

For the Slaw: Place all the vegetables and the crawfish in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk together the vinegar, sugar, tomato paste, mayonnaise, and cayenne pepper. Season the dressing with salt as needed. Mix the dressing and the vegetables to your desired level of creaminess. Adjust the seasoning as needed and refrigerate until ready to serve.

For the Hush Puppies: Purée the onion in a food processor until it is smooth. Reserve. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, and baking powder. Make a well in the center and add the remaining ingredients and ½ cup of the reserved onion purée. Mix thoroughly. The mixture should be just moist enough to barely hold its shape (like wet sand at the beach). Heat oil in a deep fryer or tall pot to 350°F. Carefully drop the mixture by rounded tablespoonfuls into the hot oil. Cook for 2 minutes, turning as needed. Drain on paper towels and season with salt. Serve warm. →

Aioli:

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| 6 | Shallots, peeled |
| 1 Tbs | Olive Oil |
| 1 cup | Mayonnaise |
| 1 tsp | Fresh Garlic, minced |
| 1 Tbs | Worcestershire Sauce |
| 1 pinch | Cayenne Pepper |

For the Aioli: Preheat the oven to 375°F. Place the shallots in the center of a piece of aluminum foil, drizzle with the oil, and wrap into a package. Roast for about 45 minutes or until the shallots are tender and caramelized. Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve. Refrigerate until needed.

For the Salmon: Preheat the grill to high. Place one salmon filet on each plank and season with salt and pepper. Place the planks on the hot grill until they are smoking. Reduce the flames on the grill to low and close the lid. Cook the salmon for about 8 minutes. Remove the salmon filets from the grill (on the planks) and sprinkle them lightly with the sugar. Caramelize the sugar evenly using a brûlée torch.

Salmon:

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| 6 7-oz | Salmon Filets, skin removed |
| 6 | Hickory Planks* |
| | Salt and Fresh Ground Black Pepper |
| 1 cup | Sugar in the Raw (Turbinado) |

*Available from www.maine-grilling-woods.com.

Finish the Dish: Place the planked salmon filet in the center of a plate. Serve with aioli on the side and extra hush puppies.

Pairing Suggestion: Pinot Grigio (Italy). An Italian Pinot Grigio with plenty of minerality is a wonderful food wine. If you want to be very specific, ask your wine retailer for something from Alto Adige. You'll find this wine cool and wonderfully refreshing during dinner and while preparing the salmon outside on the grill!

Chef's Notebook

If you do not have a brûlée torch, now is the time to get one. For a serious home cook, it is a great and versatile tool. You will have a lot of fun coming up with ways to use it in your cooking and the investment is minimal. Of course, the primary use of a brûlée torch is to caramelize the crème brûlée in the Desserts section.



