

## CLASSIC PLANKED SALMON RECIPES

Salmon is by far the most popular dish cooked on a plank, so I'm dedicating a whole section of this book to plank-cooking this majestic and delicious fish.

# cedar-planked salmon with WHISKEY-MAPLE GLAZE

Serves 6 to 8

In a way, this recipe spawned the book you're holding. I've cooked it scores of times over the past couple of years and I often get the comment, "This is the best salmon I've ever eaten." The sweet, woody flavor of the Jack Daniel's and maple syrup complements the richness of the salmon and the aroma of the cedar in this West Coast dish. I like to present it on the plank and then serve it on a bed of field greens tossed with some French walnut oil, kosher salt and toasted pumpkin seeds.

**NOTE:** The original recipe called for cooking on high heat, for about 5 minutes less time. With practice I've learned that it's better to get the plank smoking at high heat, but to turn down the grill and cook the salmon a little longer at a lower temperature. This allows it to cook more gently and evenly.

**1 cedar cooking plank, soaked overnight or at least 1 hour**

**1/2 cup | 125 mL Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey**

**1 cup | 250 mL real maple syrup**

**1 tsp | 5 mL crushed hot red chiles**

**1 Tbsp | 15 mL butter at room temperature**

**1 whole, boned fillet wild Pacific salmon  
(about 3 lb | 1.5 kg), skin on**

**kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**1 tsp | 5 mL granulated onion (or onion powder  
if you can't find granules)**

**2 lemons, halved**

**parsley sprigs for garnish**

**1 Tbsp | 15 mL finely chopped flat-leaf Italian parsley**

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## **TYPES OF SALMON**

For North American consumers there are basically five kinds of salmon available on the market.

**Chinook:** Also known as spring or king salmon, this is my favorite fish, with firm flesh, good fat content and exceptional flavor. The most exotic and delicious of all salmon is the white spring or white king, which has a light pink, almost ivory-colored flesh. I think it's best for plank-cooking because it's the largest of the salmon species, which means you can often get 4 or 5 lb | 1.8 to 2.2 kg fillets, or even larger. At its freshest, spring salmon has flesh so firm and flavorful it reminds me of lobster meat.

**Sockeye:** Sockeye has a bright red-orange color and rich, tasty flesh. It is a smaller breed, with fillets in the 2 to 3 lb (1 to 1.5 kg) range. It's tasty but easy to over-cook on the plank because of its small size.

**Coho:** This is the feistiest of west coast game fish, renowned for its habit of leaping out of the water while being reeled in. If you can get wild coho, buy it and try it. It's really succulent, and sometimes you can get fairly big fillets.

**Chum:** Leaner and lighter in color than its cousins, the chum is delicious but milder in flavor than the bigger species.

**Pink:** I love fresh pink salmon, although it's not as good for plank-cooking because it's the smallest and leanest of the salmon species. But it has a lovely delicate flavor and light-colored flesh that make it excellent for pan-frying or quick-roasting.

Make the sauce by combining the whiskey and maple syrup. In a small saucepan, bring the mixture to a low boil and reduce by about half, until you have a thick syrup that coats the back of a spoon. Add the chiles and butter and stir until just combined. Set aside and keep warm on the stovetop.

Season the skinless side of the salmon with salt, pepper and granulated onion. Let the salmon sit for 10 or 15 minutes at room temperature, until the rub is moistened.

While the salmon is sitting, preheat the grill on medium-high for 5 or 10 minutes or until the chamber temperature rises above 500°F | 260°C. Rinse the plank and place it on the cooking grate. Cover the grill and heat the plank for 4 or 5 minutes, or until it starts to throw off a bit of smoke and crackles lightly. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Season the plank with kosher salt and place the salmon, skin side down, on the plank.

Cover the grill and cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until the fish has an internal temperature of 135°F | 57°C. Check periodically to make sure the plank doesn't catch fire, and spray the burning edges with water if it does, making sure to close the lid afterwards.

When the salmon is done, squeeze half a lemon along its length and carefully transfer to a platter. Garnish with parsley sprigs and the remaining lemon cut into slices. Bring the salmon to the table. Drizzle a spoonful of the sauce over each portion as you serve and sprinkle with a little chopped parsley.