

Pan-Roasted Halibut with Sweet Corn, Chickpeas, and Tomatoes and Grilled Cornbread

Serves 4

For the Cornbread

- 10 Tb unsalted butter
- 2 Cups cornmeal
- 2 Cups all purpose flour
- ¼ sugar
- 1 Tb baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 Tb kosher salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 ½ cups buttermilk
- 3 Tb honey

For the Corn Mixture

- 2 Tb butter
- ½ cup scallions
- 2 tsp fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- Kernels from 3 ears of fresh sweet corn

For the Chickpeas and Tomatoes

- 6 oz bacon cut into cubes or lardon
- 6 – 8 small cipollini onions, peeled and cut into quarters or sixths
- ¾ cup chickpeas
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tsp sherry vinegar
- 2 Tb minced flat-leaf parsley

For the Halibut

- 4 6 oz Halibut Filets
- Zest of one lemon
- 2 tsp fresh thyme
- 2 tsp minced parsley
- Kosher salt and fresh-ground pepper

- 2 Tb butter
- Olive oil
- Basil for Garnish

About four hours before mealtime – season the halibut with thyme leaves, parsley, lemon zest, kosher salt, and pepper. Cover with plastic and place in refrigerator.

Make the cornbread – Heat oven to 400. Place 10” cast-iron pan over medium heat for one minute. Add 8 Tb of butter and cook for 4 minutes until butter is brown. Turn off the heat. In a large mixing bowl, combine all of the dry ingredients. Make a well in the center. Add the buttermilk, eggs, and honey. Thoroughly beat the wet ingredients together, then mix with dry ingredients just until combined. Fold the browned butter into the batter. Return the cast-iron pan to the stove over medium-high heat. Add the remaining 2 Tb butter to the pan, swirling to coat pan. As soon as the butter foams, pour batter into pan. Transfer immediately to oven and bake for 25 – 30 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and cool completely.

The next steps can be done in three separate pans or all in a single pan (moving things to bowls and covering with foil as you complete them). I recommend the latter.

About 30 minutes before mealtime, remove the halibut from the fridge and place on the counter. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add 2 Tb of butter. When the butter is melted, add scallions and thyme. Cook for 3 minutes. Add corn, salt, and pepper, and cook another 3 minutes or until corn is tender. Remove from heat.

If using the same skillet, quickly wipe it with a paper towel. Place it back over medium heat for a minute, then add the bacon. Cook for about 5 minutes until starting to crisp. Add cipollini onions and cook for 2 minutes. Add cherry tomatoes and chickpeas and cook for another 2 – 4 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and the sherry vinegar and remove from heat.

If using the same skillet, wipe it down again, then place it back over medium heat. Add the olive oil and 2 Tb butter. When the butter is melted, add the halibut. Cook for 4 – 5 minutes until first side is browned. Flip and cook just until the fish is cooked through, a couple more minutes.

While the fish is cooking, slice cornbread into $\frac{3}{4}$ ” thick slices. Take four slices and brush each side with either melted butter (yummier) or extra-virgin olive oil (healthier). Grill lightly until warm and brown.

Place a piece of cornbread on each plate. Top with corn, then halibut, then chickpeas and tomatoes. Garnish with some ribbons of basil.