

Four-Spice Salmon

By Mark Bittman

YIELD 4 servings

TIME 20 minutes

Fish fillets can be a weeknight cook's savior. They are healthful and easy to prepare, require little time to cook and take well to all manner of spices. In this straightforward recipe, adapted from the New York chef Katy Sparks, you start with salmon fillets, liberally rub them on one side with a mixture of ground coriander, cloves, cumin and nutmeg, and then brown them in a very hot pan so the spices form a crust. Flip once, and that's it. For the best results, use fillets of equal sizes, cook them to medium rare, and use freshly ground spices. If you have only pre-ground, be sure they haven't gone stale sitting in your cabinet too long. (Yes, spices can go stale.)

INGREDIENTS

4 6-ounce skinned salmon fillets

Salt and black pepper

1 tablespoon coriander seeds or ground coriander

1/4 teaspoon whole or ground cloves

1 1/2 teaspoons cumin seed or ground cumin

1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

2 tablespoons peanut oil, grape seed or other neutral oil, or clarified butter

PREPARATION

Step 1

Season fillets on both sides with salt and pepper. If necessary, combine spices and grind them to a coarse powder in a coffee or spice grinder. Press some of the mixture onto the top of each fillet.

Step 2

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat for 2 or 3 minutes. Add the oil or butter and, when it shimmers, place the fillets, coated side down, in the pan. Cook about 2 to 3 minutes, or until the spice mixture forms a nicely browned crust.

Step 3

Turn the fillets and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes, or until the salmon just slightly resists when pierced with a thin-bladed knife.

PRIVATE NOTES

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