

Loved by connoisseurs



In the latest of his monthly seasonal food features, **ANDY CLEGG**, of Norwich's Last Wine Bar, introduces us to sea trout, a connoisseur's fish.

If you were to judge purely from most supermarket fish counters, you would think that there were only about six types of fish which live in the sea. With the notable exception of Morrisons, whose fish counter is well-stocked with fish that have not been frozen, the selection is tiny, a real case of the usual suspects. Which is a shame.

We are generally quick to blame the supermarkets for everything that is wrong with our food today, but the fact is that people don't seem to want to buy anything other than a tiny number of familiar fish, refusing anything even remotely exotic. So we can't really complain when the choice is so limited.

Of course, the answer is to head to a proper fishmonger, where the choice will be wider and the quality better. But you have to get up early – why is it that fishmongers (like butchers) often close at the times busy people want to go shopping, like Saturday afternoon, or early evening? I'm a huge supporter of small, local food shops, but they have to adapt to today's world to survive, otherwise they are gifting their living to the supermarkets.

Anyway, rant over, today I am going to introduce you to a fish which is loved by fish connoisseurs. You may have to work a bit harder to seek it out, but believe me, it is worth it. I'm talking about the sea trout, also called the salmon trout, a name which seems designed to cause confusion - but in fact means this fish does exactly what it says on the tin.

The sea trout is closely related to the familiar brown trout, but is migratory like the salmon, feeding in the sea and returning to spawn in rivers. In appearance, it is very similar to the salmon itself, to the extent that it can be difficult to tell the two apart simply by looking at them (the sea trout is

Also In Season

Fruit/veg: Asparagus, aubergine, broad beans, Jersey Royal potatoes, rhubarb, turnips, gooseberries, strawberries

Meat/fish: Crab, mackerel, lamb, rabbit

slightly less streamlined in shape, and has a longer jaw line, extending beyond the eye).

Like its brown cousin, the sea trout starts its life in fresh water, but after two or three years it develops a silvery sheen and glands which enable it to live in salt water. Because it feeds on prawns and other crustaceans



Pan Fried Sea Trout with Jersey Royals, Asparagus, Cherry Tomatoes & Herb Salad

(Serves 4)
four 150g sea trout fillets
12 sticks of asparagus
10 cherry tomatoes
mixed fresh herbs
150g Jersey Royal potatoes
100ml white wine
juice of half a lemon
2 tsp chopped parsley
Butter
oil
salt and pepper

● Cover the potatoes in cold salted water, bring to the boil and cook until tender. In a separate pan of

water, blanch the asparagus, then transfer both potatoes and asparagus to warmed plates.

● Pan fry the sea trout in a medium hot pan with a little oil, skin side down for one minute. Now reduce the heat to low for a further four minutes, turn the fillets over and cook for another two minutes. Top the asparagus and potatoes with the trout followed by the mixed herbs.

● Deglaze the pan with the wine, reduce to a third, then add chilled butter and shake the pan. Add the parsley and lemon, and dress the dish with the contents of the pan.

● Scatter around the cherry tomatoes and serve.

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once out at sea, its flesh is pink and delicate, like the salmon. But unlike most of the salmon you will find nowadays, the sea trout is generally a wild creature.

Sea trout is at its very best right now, so next time you fancy fish for supper, or indeed can't decide what to have), get down to a proper fishmonger, or to Morrisons, and buy some sea trout. Both recipes this month are ridiculously simple, neither involve picking fishy meat off bones – and both are delicious.

Next month: Artichokes

Smoked Sea Trout With Baby Gem, Quail's Egg, Caper And Horseradish Crème Fraîche

(Serves 4)
A 200g pack of smoked sea trout, flaked
6 quail eggs
400ml crème fraîche
1 tbsp creamed horseradish
2 tsp baby capers
4 radishes, finely sliced
2 baby gem lettuce
lemon juice and zest

● Bring a pan of water to the boil and carefully put

the quail's eggs into the water. Set a timer for 2 minutes and 20 seconds, then run the eggs under cold water for the same amount of time. Drain from the water, peel and rinse.

● Mix the horseradish with the crème fraîche and lemon, season to taste

● In a bowl mix the lettuce, horseradish crème fraîche and trout. Transfer to a plate and top with capers, radish and halved quail eggs.

