Slow-Cooked Fish With Citrus and Herbs

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Total Time	45 minutes
Prep Time	10 minutes
Cook Time	35 minutes
Rating	★★★★★ (1,554)

During Nowruz, the Persian New Year, it's customary to serve fish alongside sabzi polo, buttery herbed saffron rice, as a nod to renewal and prosperity. Traditionally, white fish is smoked or fried, but this dish brings in many of the same key ingredients — fragrant saffron, fresh herbs and citrus — while embracing a more effortless, slow-roasted approach. A flaky white fish like cod or halibut works beautifully here, but salmon also works and tastes especially luxurious when bathed in olive oil, garlic and dill.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 6 servings

1 teaspoon saffron threads

3 medium leeks, trimmed

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil

6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 lemon (preferably Meyer), very thinly sliced into rounds, seeds picked out

1 clementine or mandarin orange, very thinly sliced, seeds picked out

Salt

2½ pounds boneless, skinless halibut, cod or salmon, preferably one large center-cut

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat the oven to 325 degrees. Crush the saffron threads

piece

½ cup coarsely chopped dill or tarragon or a combination

Heat the oven to 325 degrees. Crush the saffron threads into a fine powder in a mortar and pestle. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, use a spoon to crush it as finely as you can.) Dump out the ground saffron into a small bowl and pour 3 tablespoons of warm water over it. Set aside.

Step 2

Cut the leeks in half lengthwise then coarsely chop. Give the leeks a good rinse to get rid of any dirt or sand.

Step 3

Heat ¼ cup of oil in a large skillet over medium. Add the leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft but not browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the garlic and all citrus slices, season with salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the garlic and citrus have softened and everything smells very delicious, 2 to 3 minutes. Slide the skillet off the heat and scoop out half the leek mixture into a small bowl.

Step 4

Generously season the fish with salt on all sides and place in the center of the skillet over the leeks. Pour the saffron water over and around the fish, then top with the remaining leek mixture. Scatter the dill all over and pour in the remaining ½ cup oil. Transfer the skillet to the oven.

Step 5

Bake until the fish is opaque and easily flakes off with a fork around the thickest part, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve as is in the skillet or use two forks to tear the fish into large pieces and transfer to a platter. Spoon all the leeks, citrus and fat over, taste and season with more salt if needed, and serve.

Private Notes

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