

Mackerel

Did you know that “mackerel sky” describes the silvery clouds that often precede a storm? Fishermen say that mackerel will bite at anything before a storm.

The most common species of mackerel found in fresh seafood markets in NY are the Atlantic or northern, Spanish, and King. The Atlantic mackerel, the most common in NY, is a small, bullet-shaped fish with dark, wavy stripes on its back and a silvery metallic color. Atlantic mackerel are usually available from fall to spring with peak harvests from February through April. Adult Atlantic mackerel run about 1 to 2 pounds and are usually sold whole.

All mackerel are delicate fish that should be handled properly and kept as cold as possible from the time they are caught until they are eaten. The freshest fish have a characteristic bright metallic color and a mild neutral odor reminiscent of an ocean breeze. Fresh mackerel is one of the tastiest, cheapest, most versatile, and most plentiful fish available from fall to spring.

Though mackerel is fatty with more than 10% fat content and over 50% of its calories from fat, it is also a rich source of heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Because of its high fat content, mackerel is often grilled or smoked, but it can also be pan-fried, baked or broiled. Mackerel is rich-flavored, moist and often cooked with acidic flavorings such as lemon or tomato. Cooked Atlantic mackerel tends to have a softer texture than Spanish or King mackerel.

—NY Seafood Council

*Bringing
Science to
the Shore*

Mackerel Puttanesca

Ingredients

- 2 large (10 ounce or more) or 4 small (6-8 ounce) mackerel fillets with skin on flour for dusting
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon onion (diced fine)
- 1 teaspoon garlic (chopped)
- 2 teaspoons small capers
- 6 anchovy fillets (diced)
- 4 pepperoncini or Tuscan peppers (diced)
- 8 black nicoise olives (pitted & halved)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree (or juice from canned tomatoes)
- 6 plum tomatoes (diced)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
- salt & pepper to taste

*An original recipe by Chef Stanley Kramer
Docks Oyster Bar & Seafood Grill, New York City*



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Method

Season fish with salt and pepper. Dust with flour and shake off excess. Sauté fillets in olive oil, flesh side first for 2-3 minutes. Turn fillets over and cook other side for an additional 2-3 minutes until flesh turns opaque. Remove fillets and keep warm. Save oil.

Saute onion and garlic in the oil that the fillets were cooked in. Cook until soft but not brown (about 5 minutes). Add capers, anchovies, pepperoncini, olives, basil and oregano. Cook for several minutes. Add canned tomato juice or puree. Mix well and add diced plum tomatoes. Simmer approximately 5 more minutes. Salt and pepper to taste. Pour sauce over mackerel fillets. Sprinkle with chopped parsley. Serve with orzo (rice shaped pasta) or rice pilaf.

This dish can also be made with other full flavored fish such as bluefish.

Preparation time: 20 minutes. Serves 2-4

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