

## Merluza a la Plancha

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The Spanish love their hake. Actually, they love our hake which they've been pinching for years. I'd spent a frustrating but amusing afternoon looking for Spanish *Merluza a la Plancha* recipes on the internet. The amusement stemmed from the absolutely dreadful automated browser translations offered of Spanish language pages. There's clearly something about Spanish that makes it harder to translate mechanically than French, which seems to get a half-way reasonable job done. In between the tears of laughter, it was enough, however, to give me the basic idea. This is my attempt at the essence of the dish.

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### Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	10 mins
cooking time:	6-8 mins

### Ingredients

4 hake steaks, ~2½cms thick  
salt & pepper  
olive oil  
1 large clove garlic, finely sliced  
2 tbs fresh parsley, chopped  
juice of a lemon

### Method

Immediately before you are ready to cook, sprinkle the hake steaks with a little lemon juice, then season them with salt and pepper. (Avoid salting it too soon because it draws the juices out of the fish.) Sprinkle a little of the parsley - about a quarter in all - on both sides of each hake steak, too.

On gentle heat, heat a little olive oil in a skillet (preferably black iron) or, if you have one a flat griddle. Toss in the garlic and stir it around until it begins to colour, then remove it with a slotted spoon. Increase the heat to moderate and put in the hake steaks. Cook the steaks for 3-4 minutes on each side - you want them to take on a light golden brown colour. Remove the hake to warmed serving plates.

Add the remaining parsley and lemon juice to the pan (you may need a little more olive oil, too). Stir this around briefly, scraping any tasty bits into the juice and pour it over the hake steaks.

This works well with the Spring Vegetables recipe and some oven-roasted vine cherry tomatoes. New potatoes with olive oil don't go amiss, either.