

Salmon en Croute

This recipe is an adaptation of one in the Reader's Digest *Cookery Year*. The original uses double cream in the asparagus mixture but I find that light cream cheese binds it better and has less tendency to wet the pastry. It also wraps the salmon in bacon before wrapping it in pastry, which I prefer to omit, letting the salmon speak for itself.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	45 mins
cooking time:	40 mins

Ingredients

3-4 lb salmon (preferably wild, dream on)
3/4 - 1 lb asparagus (or 12 oz. can of asparagus spears)
2 tbs cream cheese
1/2 tsp chopped fresh dill
8 oz prepared puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
siliconized baking parchment
salt and pepper

Method

Wash the salmon thoroughly under running water. Remove the head and tail from the salmon. Take the two side fillets off the backbone and skin them. Remove as many pin bones as possible with tweezers.

If you are using fresh asparagus, wash and trim it then steam it until the tips are soft to the touch. Alternatively, open the can of asparagus spears with panache and drain them. By whichever route you got here, rub the asparagus spears through a sieve. Beat into this the cream cheese, the chopped dill and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Divide the pastry into two halves and roll both into sheets large enough to cover the salmon, leaving an edge to seal both together. Place one side of the salmon on one sheet of the pastry, spread the asparagus puree over it and place the second salmon fillet on top so as to reform the fish. Moisten the edges of the pastry with water, put the second pastry sheet on top of everything and seal the parcel all around.

Place the salmon on a sheet of baking parchment on a baking tray. Cut three vents in the pastry parcel to allow steam to escape during baking. Brush the pastry with the beaten egg and bake in the centre of a pre-heated oven at mark 7 for 20 minutes. Lower the heat to mark 5 and bake for a further 20 minutes.