



A Race to the Finnish


ANOTHER DAY, or rather, another frigid day. The sun was on holiday; it packed its bags and said, “Later.” I called a friend who said she was ordering from catalogues she had gotten in the mail. Any cute dresses? Any shoes on sale? No, and no. These were seed catalogues. Wait! Summer is months away. Who buys seeds now? Evidently the same people who have their Christmas gifts purchased and wrapped by Labor Day. She was grossed out. She too said “Later.”

I moped around for a while, then started pawing through the cupboards and fridge. Leftover stew, some mushroom soup. Brown and brown. More Brussels sprouts. Always more Brussels sprouts. The previous night I undercooked them. Chomping on them felt like I was causing cranial damage.

This so-called comfort food wasn't. Not by a long shot. I wanted something brightly colored. Something that at least portended the arrival of spring. I threw on my coat and headed to the market. There was a display of citrus that caught my eye. I picked up a grapefruit and some blood oranges. I envisioned the tart brightness of a salad. My mouth was watering at the thought. I headed back to the seafood counter.

A FINNISH-ING TOUCH

The woman ahead of me was telling “the fish guy” about the salmon she ate while traveling through Finland. Finnish chefs cure salmon (graavilohi) much the same way we make gravlax. It's cured with a mixture of coarse salt and sugar, then wrapped, and allowed to hang out in the refrigerator for a day or two before being thinly sliced and served with accompaniments such as cucumber, capers, and dill. She said she was buying two pieces of salmon; one to cure, one to cook for dinner that night. Sounded good to me. I did the same. “Excuse me,” I said. “I overheard you talking about how good the salmon was in Finland. What was different about it?”

She said cooks in Finland take wonderfully fresh wild salmon and cook it SLOWLY. I was used to cooking my salmon at 400 degrees. She suggested I try a much lower temperature for a silky piece of fish. Okay! Her enthusiasm was contagious. I was grinning like a fool as I headed home with my salmon and citrus. Spring wasn't around the corner, but it sure was right inside my door. 

Mustard Crusted Salmon



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 (6 oz.) skin-on salmon fillets (I bought center cut rather than the thin tail piece)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 8 teaspoons whole grain Dijon mustard
- 4 tablespoons breadcrumbs, such as panko
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped soft herbs such as tarragon, parsley, or basil

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Oil a rimmed baking sheet, or line with parchment paper. Place salmon skin side down on baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread 2 teaspoons mustard on each fillet. Toss the breadcrumbs with the olive oil and divide evenly on the fish fillets. Bake the salmon in the center of the oven for 15-18 minutes until it is firm, but still pink in the center. Remove from oven and top with chopped fresh herbs.

April is **VOLUNTEER MONTH**

Join us for Barrington Area Volunteer Connection LIVE
Saturday, April 13, 1 – 4 PM at Barrington Area Library

Connect with local nonprofits at this combination volunteer fair, donation day, and community networking. Join us to learn about volunteer opportunities, local resources, and donate requested items.



Drop in or register for a reminder. For more information, scan the QR code or visit balibrary.org/community.

Citrus Salad

INGREDIENTS:

Citrus of your choice, such as oranges, blood oranges, or grapefruit, peeled and cut into rings or segments

A sprinkling of flaky salt and freshly ground pepper

A few thin slices of red onion

Pinch red pepper flakes

Scant 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

4 tablespoons olive oil

Chopped walnuts or pistachios for garnish



INSTRUCTIONS

Arrange slices or segments of citrus on serving plates or platter and sprinkle with a little flaky salt and freshly ground pepper. Top with a few slices of onion and a pinch of red pepper flakes.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar and olive oil. Drizzle over the citrus. Scatter some chopped walnuts or pistachios over the top and serve



PHOTO: GIRMANTAS URBONAS

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