

Something's Fishy!



Many of my clients ask about the benefits of salmon. When shopping for fish at the grocery store, I select only wild Pacific salmon based on my own research, views and opinions.

Salmon is a good source of protein, omega-3 fatty acids, Vitamins D, B6, B12, niacin, selenium and magnesium.

Much of the salmon sold today is farm cultivated rather than wild. Farmed salmon are raised in floating pens in Chile, Canada, Europe and the United States.

Various Internet sites document independent scientific research showing that farmed salmon may not be the best choice for human consumption. On the other hand, an article "Myths and Realities about Salmon Farming" by Fisheries and Oceans Canada will say the opposite. (<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/back-fiche/2005/salmon-eng.htm>)

Wild salmon obtain their pink flesh colour from the prey they eat. Farmed salmon obtain their pink flesh colour from an added pigment, canthaxanthin or astaxanthin. Food dyes can be dangerous to health. For example, in children's food, certain dyes have been linked to ADD/ADHD.

One salmon comparison by a Wall Street Journal taste test scored farmed salmon at 4.83 out of 10, while wild salmon rated 9.7. Many chefs have written to agree on this point.

A recent European Union study found that fishmeal and fish oil used to feed farmed salmon contains dioxins at levels higher than what wild fish receive. One analysis found that BC farmed salmon was nearly ten times higher in PCBs compared to the wild variety. (http://www.sectionz.info/ISSUE_1/facts_footnotes.html) The Canadian Fisheries and Oceans web site states that "PCBs and other contaminants are a legacy of industrial practices that find their way into the food chain in nearly all foods." Also, The Healthy Child Science Advisory Committee concluded that "On average, one could only

eat one meal of farmed salmon a month without increasing the risk of cancer. In contrast, wild salmon can safely be consumed up to eight meals per month." (http://healthychild.org/blog/comments/a_doctors_view_point_chemical_contaminants_and_farmed_salmon/)

Antibiotics are sometimes used by fish farmers to keep their fish stocks healthy. As grocers are not required to label their products as antibiotic free, "Why would I want to chance eating fish containing antibiotics that may be harmful to human anatomy when I can eat wild fish that is antibiotic free?"

Fish farm pens produce fecal waste. A salmon farm releases a footprint of nitrogen, phosphorus and fecal matter into a relatively small area. Wild salmon are not pen confined and swim free of collective waste.

For entrepreneurial reasons, Atlantic salmon are being farmed off the coast of British Columbia. Escaped farmed salmon compete in the same food chain of the resident Pacific salmon. As both fish are carnivores, "Will the escaped salmon affect the health of the wild salmon and deprive us of this natural resource?"

Bottom line, I believe that until new information within a level playing field shows all salmon to be equal, wild Pacific salmon is the best catch; fish that is caught away from breeding pens and contaminates.

Here is a good recipe I recommend for salmon.

Chipotle Maple Catch

1 fillet of Wild Pacific salmon
¼ cup Olive Oil
1 tsp. basil
¼ to ½ cup maple syrup
1 tsp. Chipotle pepper
1 green onion, chopped
20 snow peas
½ red pepper, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cover baking tray with unbleached parchment paper. Wash fish and place skin side down on baking tray. Drizzle olive oil and brush to coat whole fillet. Sprinkle basil over fillet. Bake in middle rack of oven approx. 15 -20 min until flakey. Mix together maple syrup and chipotle pepper. Remove from oven and sprinkle chopped onion, snow peas and red pepper over fillet then pour maple syrup mixture over top. Put back in oven and heat for 5 – 7 minutes.

Remove from oven and cut into serving pieces.