

ROASTED WHOLE MACKEREL WITH LEMONGRASS AND SPICES

SERVES 4

This is one of the easiest recipes in the book. Pick really long stalks of lemongrass and let some of the stalk stick out of the fishes' mouths; it looks really dramatic.

Another way of cooking this would be to wrap the fish in banana leaves, cook them on a hot pan or barbecue for a few minutes on either side and then finish in the oven if necessary.

Slash the mackerel 2 or 3 times on each side with a sharp knife. Rub in the salt and chilli powder and set aside for 30 minutes.

Make the spice paste by blending all the ingredients together in a food processor or blender. Cover both sides of each fish with the spice paste, insert a stalk of lemongrass through the mouth and set aside for another 30 minutes.

Place the fish on a baking tray and cook in an oven preheated to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 for 12–15 minutes, turning them over once half way through the cooking time. Serve with the lemon wedges.

4 mackerel, cleaned and fins trimmed
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons red chilli powder
4 lemongrass stalks, bruised
lemon wedges, to serve

For the spice paste:

8 shallots, peeled
2 garlic cloves, peeled
2.5cm (1-inch) piece of fresh ginger
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
5 dried red chillies, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes, then drained
2 green chillies
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
10 fresh curry leaves
1 tablespoon tamarind paste
2 tablespoons vegetable or corn oil
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon sugar

