

BAKED SALMON WITH A PISTACHIO, HONEY AND HERB CRUST 101

Salmone in crosta di erbe, miele e pistacchi

SERVES 4

80g shelled pistachio nuts
30g fresh white breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons runny honey
4 skinned salmon fillets, each about 200g
1½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

My grandmother, Nonna Flora, used to make this dish every Christmas and for other special occasions; otherwise, we rarely ate salmon and it was a real treat. The pistachios – a Sicilian touch – give great flavour and a nutty texture, and help to keep the fish moist. I have also tried this recipe with cod and it works perfectly. Serve with lemon wedges and Artichokes Braised in Wine (see page 151).

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4. Chop the pistachios very finely so they are about the same size as the breadcrumbs. Sieve them to remove the dusty skins. Place in a small bowl with the breadcrumbs and herbs and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle over the honey, mix well and set aside.
2. Brush a little oil over the bottom of a baking dish. Place the salmon in the dish and season with salt and pepper. Top one side of the fillets with the pistachio mixture, pressing it down firmly with the back of a spoon.
3. Drizzle with the oil and bake for 25 minutes or until the topping is golden and crisp.