

Hazelnut Crusted Salmon with Pea Puree and Fresh Ricotta

Fresh Ricotta

3 cups whole milk

1 cup heavy cream

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Salt

Pea Puree and Sugar Snap Pea Garnish

Salt

8 sugar snap peas

10 ounces (about 2 ½ cups) fresh or thawed frozen peas

¼ cup roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

¼ cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro

Freshly ground black pepper

Hazelnut Herb-Crusted Salmon

4 (6-ounce) skin-on salmon fillets

4 ounces (1 ½ cups) hazelnuts

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro

1 large egg white, lightly beaten

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

4 lemon wedges

To make the fresh ricotta: Pour the milk and cream into a large saucepan and stir to combine. Attach a deep-fryer thermometer onto the side of the pan, place over medium-low heat, and bring the mixture to 190°F, stirring occasionally with a whisk to prevent scorching on the bottom of the pan. Do not let it boil. Stir in the lemon juice and salt, then remove from the heat and leave for 15 to 20 minutes, until the curds (solids) separate from the whey (liquid). Line a colander or mesh strainer with cheesecloth, scoop the big curds out of the pot with a slotted spoon, and transfer them to the strainer (removing the larger curds first helps keep them from splashing as

you pour). Pour the remaining curds and whey from the strainer. Continue draining the ricotta for at least 1 hour and up to 3 hours, occasionally pouring out the whey that drips into the bowl. Set aside the ricotta for plating. The ricotta will keep, stored in an airtight container, for up to a week in the refrigerator.

To make the pea puree and snap pea garnish: Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil and heavily salt it. Add the sugar snap peas and blanch for just a few seconds, until slightly softened but still very crisp. Scoop the snap peas out with a slotted spoon and place them on a paper towel-lined plate to dry. Return the water to a boil for the peas. Split the snap peas in half to expose the peas, trying to keep all the peas on one side. Set aside for garnish.

Fill a medium bowl with ice and water to make an ice-water bath. Add the peas to the blanching water and cook for about 1 ½ minutes, until crisp-tender, then add the parsley and cilantro and blanch for an additional 30 seconds, or until the peas and herbs are softened. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to the ice-water bath, reserving the blanching liquid. Strain the peas and herbs from the ice-water bath and transfer them to a blender. Add 2 tablespoons of the blanching liquid and blend until smooth and creamy,

adding more liquid, 1 tablespoon at a time, if needed. The pea puree should be firm enough to hold a soft mound but thin enough to squeeze through a plating bottle. Spoon the mixture into a squeeze bottle for plating (or take out a large spoon to spread the puree).

To make the hazelnut herb-crusted salmon: Place the hazelnuts into a large skillet. Place over medium heat and toast for about 5 minutes, shaking the pan often to keep the nuts from burning, until they emit a nutty aroma and are lightly browned. Wrap the nuts in a clean kitchen towel and allow to rest for 1 minute, then rub the nuts through the towel to remove loose skins (some skins may not come off; that is OK). Allow the nuts to cool, then transfer them to a small food processor and pulse until broken down into approximately ¼-inch pieces. Add the cilantro and parsley and pulse briefly to combine. Turn the nut mixture out onto a baking sheet and shake the pan a bit to create a thick, even layer.

Brush the flesh side of each salmon fillet with egg white and season with salt and pepper. Set the fillets into the nut mixture and press down firmly to ensure a firm, even coating. Invert the salmon onto a plate and refrigerate for about 15 minutes for the nuts to bond to the salmon.

Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until sizzling (test the oil by placing a small piece of hazelnut in the oil; if it bubbles around the nut, it is ready). Place the salmon fillets in the skillet crust side down and cook for 3 minutes, or until the hazelnuts are lightly browned. Flip the salmon over and cook for 2 more minutes, or until the fish skin is nicely browned and the flesh flakes easily.

To plate: Squeeze a circle of the pea puree about 2 inches wide from the squeeze bottle into the middle of each plate. Place a large spoon in a cup of very hot water to warm it, then place the spoon all the way into the ricotta, rotating your wrist all the way to the left and then all the way back to make perfect oval scoops. Set the ricotta onto the center of the pea puree. Place the salmon gently on top of the ricotta and finish by leaning 2 sugar snap against the ricotta.