

A coastal landscape at sunset with a white text box in the center. The sky is a mix of teal and orange, and the water is a deep blue. The text box is white and contains a quote and the name of the chef.

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During the colder months in the Bay Area, fisherman will bring in beautiful halibut, whose flesh is firm and has almost a pinkish hue. Because it lacks the fattiness that its Alaskan counterpart has, cooking it can be a bit tricky. The margin for error is small in avoiding a dry and tough cooked fish. However, prepared raw, Pacific halibut is very forgiving and has a wonderful texture due to its leanness. It can be enjoyed just as well without curing, but I think it adds a nice layer of flavor by doing so.

CHEF SCOTT NISHIYAMA

BY CHEF
SCOTT NISHIYAMA

SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO
PAIR WITH ANIMÉ ROSÉ OF PINOT NOIR

Cured California Halibut with Rhubarb Vinaigrette

Ingredients

SERVES 4

TOTAL TIME:

1 1/2 HOURS

ACTIVE TIME:

1 HOUR

- 1 lb Pacific halibut filet
- 3 T white shoyu
- 1 c kosher salt
- ½ c granulated sugar
- Zest of two lemons
- Kombu powder*
- 2 Japanese cucumbers
- Virgin sesame oil
(preferably not toasted)
- 3 stalks rhubarb
- 2 T mirin
- 1 t sugar



Steps

1. Preparing Halibut and Cucumber

Make sure the halibut is clean of any scales by gently washing it in cold water. Dry the filet with a clean towel or paper towels.

Mix the kosher salt, granulated sugar, and lemon zest in a bowl. Make sure to incorporate the zest evenly. Thoroughly coat the halibut filets with the salt/sugar mixture on all sides. Place fish on a plate or platter and top with the remaining mixture. Cover the fish with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Remove the fish from the salt/sugar mixture and rinse well under cold water to remove all of the salt. Pat gently dry with a towel.

Over a plate, dust all sides of the fish with kombu powder. Wrap the fish in plastic wrap and reserve in the refrigerator.

Wash and peel the cucumber and slice at a slight angle to produce 1/8" thick rounds. Sprinkle the cucumber slices generously with kosher salt. Allow to sit for 3 minutes. Rinse the salt off thoroughly with cold water. If the cucumber tastes very salty, soak it in cold water for a few minutes. Drain and dry with a paper towel.

2. Preparing Vinaigrette

Juice the rhubarb, reserving the juice and discarding the pulp. Strain the juice and add the mirin, sugar, and white shoyu. Add more sugar and/or white shoyu if needed. The vinaigrette should be a balance of slight sweetness, salty

soy, and sourness of the rhubarb. Chill the vinaigrette in the refrigerator.

3. Plating

Using a sharp slicing knife, slice the fish using a single stroke, trying not to handle the fish more than necessary. Arrange the halibut slices on a plate, with the cucumber rounds in between the fish. Pour the rhubarb vinaigrette around the fish and finish with the virgin sesame oil. Serve immediately with a glass of animé rosé of Pinot Noir.

*Kombu is a type of seaweed used most commonly for making a traditional Japanese broth, called dashi. To make the powder, take a dried piece of kombu and tear it into small pieces. Place the pieces into a coffee or spice grinder and run it until the kombu becomes a fine powder. The powder can be sifted at this point to remove any larger pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature indefinitely.

CHEF

Scott Nishiyama

Originally from Hawaii, Chef Scott Nishiyama graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in New York and has worked in some of the best fine-dining restaurants on both US coasts including Cello, Town, Daniel, The French Laundry, Yoshi's, and Chez TJ. He is looking forward to opening his first restaurant, Ethel's Fancy, located in Palo Alto. The restaurant's menu will feature fresh, locally-sourced vegetables and offer dishes influenced by Japanese, French, and California cuisine.