

Live Better Wild

Winter in Alaska

Featuring Mandy Dixon





The Warmth of Winter

One of our favorite parts of winter is stomping the snow from our boots and stepping foot from the quiet, cold outdoors into the inviting warmth of home. Warmth, of course, refers to temperature, but also to the loving conversation of family and friends, and to the delicious smells emanating from the kitchen.

The following pages are meant as a guide of sorts for living healthy and wild this winter season, healthy in every sense of the word. They're meant to be inspiration for getting out there and enjoying the beauty of nature during this wonderfully quiet and cold season and also for warming the body and soul with seafood recipes perfect for this time of year.

No kitchen smells better than that of Mandy Dixon, a renowned chef, lifelong Alaskan, and personal friend of the Kallenberg family. In these pages we've partnered with Mandy to bring you her ruminations on wintertime in Alaska, in the form of a few lovely short essays, as well as several of her favorite recipes for this time of year. And we'll conclude with an essay from our own Monica Haim-Kallenberg about the beauty

of wintertime and the power of memories from winters past, followed by some of her favorite deliciously warm seafood recipes. Thanks for joining us here, and be on the lookout in the coming weeks for information about our forthcoming cookbook, *Eat Wild: Cooking at Home With the Seafood of Alaska*. Our wish for you this winter is that you stay warm, eat well, and live wild!

Winter Reflections from Tutka Bay

By Mandy Dixon

My name is Mandy Dixon. I am the chef/owner of Tutka Bay Lodge, a small wilderness retreat located across the bay from Homer, Alaska. I was born and raised here, spending my childhood at a remote lodge where I first learned to cook with locally caught salmon, foraged greens, and an endless supply of wild inspiration. Growing up surrounded by mountains, ocean tides, and towering spruce trees shaped my understanding of food and community. Every bite I prepare today is a reflection of the lessons I learned in that simple, self-sufficient life in the backcountry where the rhythms of nature are the culinary story I tell.

From an early age, I spent time in my mother's kitchen cooking for guests traveling to remote Alaska. In the winter, we kept warm by splitting wood for the stove, exploring the natural world, and testing new recipes in our kitchen. As a chef, I carry on this tradition of creative exploration and hospitality at Tutka Bay Lodge. The remote setting might be quieter in winter, but it gives me time to reflect on my roots, experiment with wild ingredients, and remain connected to the land that has always been my most generous teacher.

Nestled across Kachemak Bay from the vibrant town of Homer, Tutka Bay Lodge seems to rest in a hushed dreamscape during the winter months. The bay is quieter, and the snowy peaks wrap themselves in soft

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clouds, embracing those of us who are lucky enough to spend winters in Alaska. Homer, known for its strong fishing community and artistic charm, always feels like a cozy lighthouse in winter — a place where you can stock up on essentials, catch up with friends, and experience the comforting hum of local life. But once you head back across the bay, you return to nature's theater, where the only lights guiding you home are the glow of the aurora borealis and the snow sparkling under the moon.

Like many Alaskans, I find solace in these short, chilled days. The winter hush gives me time to reflect on my commitment to the cuisine I want to share with others — abundant fish, foraged ingredients, and the quality of life lived close to nature. My senses remain tied to the rhythms of the land and sea.



Alaska Crab Tart

Yield: 6-12 servings

Ingredients

4 large eggs

1 cup heavy cream

½ cup sour cream

¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons fresh or dried chopped
chives

Salt and pepper to taste

2 ounces chorizo sausage

1 medium leek, dark green removed,
sliced

2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced

1 shallot, peeled and minced

1 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme

1 homemade or store-bought tart shell,
par-baked

2 cups Alaskan crab meat

Where I live, we can drop crab pots right out my front door in the winter months. I am crazy about the combination of chorizo and crab. This recipe balances the rich brininess of Alaska crab with smoky chorizo and a velvety custard. It's a recipe you can dress up or down and make it your own, but by using Alaska crab, it becomes an elevated showstopper regardless. It's great any time of day and it makes a special dish to share with friends.

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

In a medium bowl whisk together the eggs, cream, sour cream, Parmesan, and chives. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Brown the chorizo in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. After about 1 minute, add in the leek, garlic, shallot, and thyme. Sauté while stirring until the leek is tender. Drain away any grease. Season with salt and pepper. Cool the filling.

Place the chorizo mixture into the tart shell evenly. Sprinkle in 1 cup of the crab meat. Gently pour in the egg and cream mixture. Bake the tart for about 30 minutes or until the custard is set.

Add the remaining 1 cup of the crab sprinkled over the top. Serve the tart warm or at room temperature topped with any leftover herbs.



Salmon Hand Pies

Yield: 6 hand pies

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, more for greasing ring molds
- 1 small red onion, peeled and minced
- ½ head green cabbage, cored and shredded
- ½ pound domestic mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- ½ teaspoon caraway seed
- 3 (6 ounce) portions Alaskan salmon, skin removed
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 sheets store-bought or homemade puff pastry
- All-purpose flour
- 2 cups cooked short grain brown rice
- 1 large egg, hard-boiled, peeled and chopped
- ½ cup Manchego cheese, shredded
- ½ cup fine breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh or dried parsley
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 large egg, cracked and beaten

When winter days settle in and the chill seems to linger, nothing warms the kitchen (or the soul) quite like the aroma of golden pastry baking to perfection. These cozy, individually baked salmon pies bring together tender salmon, buttery cabbage, earthy mushrooms, and a hint of caraway under a flaky puff pastry crust. My version, inspired by the layered tradition of Russian coulibiac pies, features a bit of short grain brown rice, shredded Manchego cheese, chopped hard-boiled egg, and a drizzle of cream for richness. Feel free to poach, pan-sear, or bake the salmon — each cooking technique adds its own subtle flavor to the final dish. Whether you stack the ingredients neatly or mix them together, these warm and savory pies make for a comforting winter meal.

Preheat the oven to 375°F degrees Fahrenheit. Have ready six 4-inch buttered ring molds.

In a large sauté pan, melt the 3 tablespoons butter over low heat. Add in the onion. Sauté until the onion is softened, about 7 minutes. Add in the cabbage, mushrooms, and caraway. Increase the heat to medium, adding in more butter if necessary. Cook until the cabbage and mushrooms are tender, about 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Poach, bake, grill or pan-sear the salmon. Each of these techniques offers a little variation in flavor and texture. If you prepare the salmon any way other than poaching, I usually like to rub the fish with good quality olive oil and season with salt and pepper. This prevents the fish from sticking to the pan surface and protects the flesh from drying out before cooking. The salmon can be a little undercooked because it will cook additionally in the pie. Let the salmon cool and flake it into medium chunks.

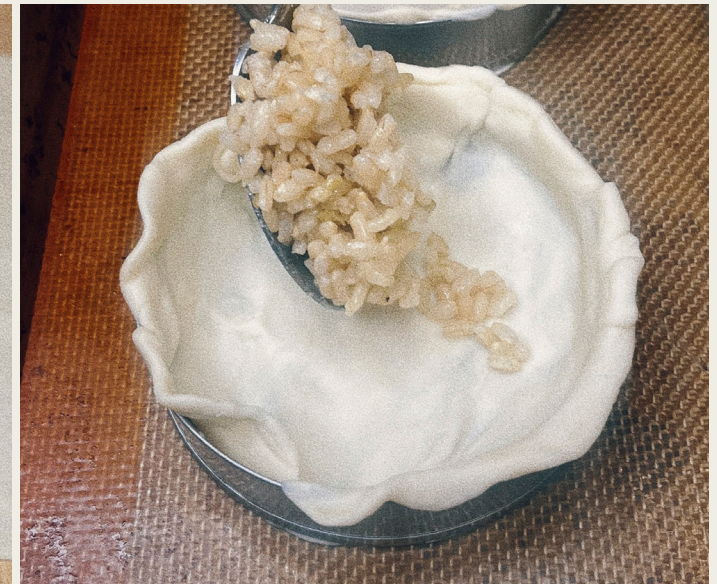
Line a standard baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the two sheets of puff pastry to 1/8-inch thick. Using a 6-inch round cutter, cut the dough into 12 rounds. Place the ring molds, evenly spaced, onto the baking sheet. Cover the remaining six 4-inch ring molds



with a cloth or plastic wrap so they don't dry out. Place one puff pastry round on top of each ring mold. Press the dough down in the ring mold to make a well, making sure the dough drapes over the sides of the mold. Place some of the rice equally onto each pastry. Press the rice down to make an even layer. Sprinkle in some of the chopped egg, dividing equally. Add a layer of flaked salmon and grated cheese. Next, add the breadcrumbs and parsley. Finally, add in the onion, mushroom and cabbage mixture among. Sprinkle the filling of each pie with salt and pepper to taste. Pour a small amount of heavy cream over the filling ingredients. The ingredients should be slightly mounded up over the edge of the ring mold.

Brush the rims of filled pies with a little water and place the remaining rounds on top of each pie. Crimp the edges together to seal between two fingers to make a decorative edge up and away slightly from the ring mold (so it can slip off when the pie is done). Use any leftover dough to cut out small decorative shapes if desired. Cut vents on top of dough to release steam. Brush dough with the beaten egg.

Bake on the top rack of the oven until the pastry is golden brown, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the ring molds. Serve warm.



Winter's Harvest Fishing & Foraging

Even in the heart of winter, Alaska's resources continue to offer their gifts. The chilly waters that define our home are still rich with possibilities. Depending on the weather — and the tides — we might head out for a bit of winter ocean fishing. Each catch is a reminder of Alaska's endless bounty.

Foraging doesn't stop when the snow falls; it simply changes shape. In winter, I turn to gathering evergreens for infusions — spruce needles that lend a fragrant, citrusy brightness to broths or syrups, forest fungi for the stew pot, and lingering berries for our salmon glaze. Kelp, sea greens and other seaweed can be collected near the tideline to be used fresh, dried or pickled. These small foraging excursions keep me grounded. They are a way to honor what the season offers, to reconnect with our environment, and to remember that vibrant life continues, no matter how quiet winter seems.

— Mandy Dixon



Salmon Bacon with Berry Lacquer

Yield: 10 slices of bacon

Ingredients

8 ounces Cold Smoked Sockeye Salmon
(about 12 slices)
½ pound frozen or fresh berries (blueberry or other)
½ cup honey
½ cup apple cider
½ shallot, sliced
1 teaspoon freshly ground coarse black pepper

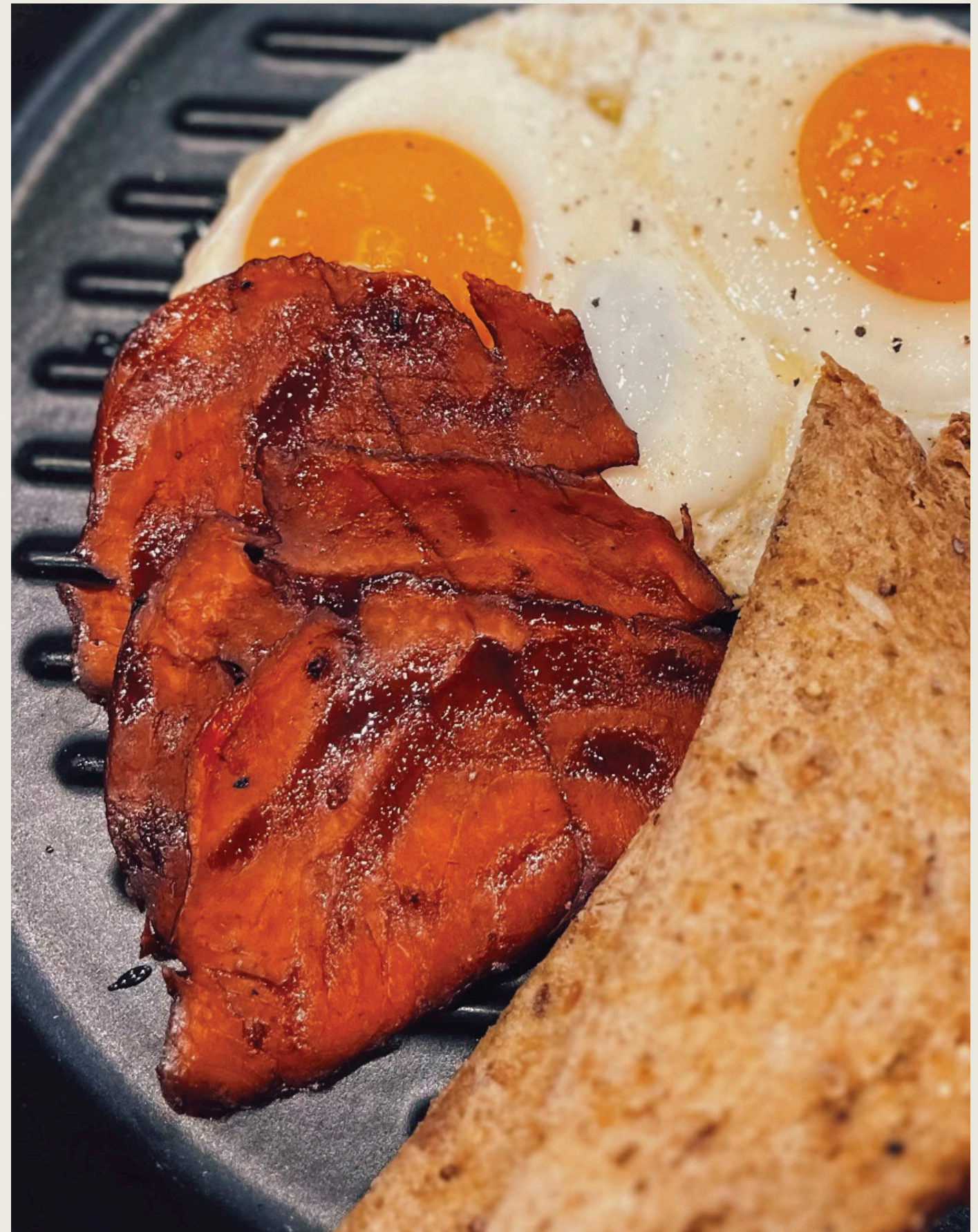
When the cold weather sets in, there’s nothing like a splash of vibrant color — and flavor — to liven up your plate. Cold smoked salmon (lox) is a staple we always have on hand, summer or winter, and this recipe is my playful alternative to traditional breakfast bacon. Brushed with a syrupy berry lacquer (pure maple syrup is delicious as well), each slice becomes a sweet, savory treat that’s crispy, surprising, and satisfying. Serve it as a unique breakfast side or an elegant addition to a holiday appetizer platter — either way, it will be a conversation starter.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or select a non-stick baking sheet. Lay down each of the pieces of salmon onto the baking sheet. Set aside.

Place the berries, honey, apple cider, shallot, and about a teaspoon of black pepper into a small heavy bottomed saucepan. Heat over medium-low heat for about 30 minutes until the mixture has reduced to a thick syrupy consistency. Add a little additional apple cider if more liquid is necessary.

Brush the salmon with the berry lacquer. Place the baking sheet onto the center rack of the oven and bake for about 5 to 6 minutes or until the bacon is just crisp.



Halibut Sliders

Yield: 8 sliders

Ingredients

- 3 (6 oz.) portions Pacific halibut
- 1 lemon, halved
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh or dried parsley
- 1 cup unseasoned fine breadcrumbs, divided
- ½ medium yellow onion, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 2 tablespoons green chopped onion
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons garlic mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup baby spinach, washed and dried
- 8 mini brioche (or other) slider buns
- 4 tablespoons barbecue sauce

When you’re craving something light yet indulgent, maybe served alongside a piping-hot bowl of winter soup, these halibut sliders hit the right notes. Poaching the fish keeps it moist and flaky, while a tangy barbecue sauce and a layer of dressed spinach lend a bright, savory flavor. (Tip: We make our own barbecue sauce, but you could add in a bit of pureed blueberries into your favorite BBQ sauce for an Alaskan touch.) Tucked into mini brioche buns (try butter-toasting these for a little extra crunch), they’re a fun twist on the classic slider — elegant enough for a dinner party but easy enough for a quick weeknight meal.

Rinse and pat dry the fish. Fill a medium saucepan with enough water to come up about two inches. Add half of the lemon, a ¼ teaspoon salt, and half of the parsley. Bring the water to a simmer and add in the fish. Poach until done, about 5-7 minutes, or until the fish flakes nicely with a fork. Remove the fish from the pan, flake apart completely, and set aside to cool.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the halibut, half a cup of the breadcrumbs, the yellow onion, hot sauce, green onion, remaining parsley, the egg and the mayonnaise. Gently mix the ingredients together until fully incorporated. Shape the mixture into 8 patties. Dredge each one lightly in the remaining breadcrumbs. Refrigerate for 10 minutes to firm the patties up.

In a medium sauté pan, melt the butter and two tablespoons of the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add in the cakes and cook until golden, about 3 minutes per side.

Squeeze the remaining half lemon and drizzle the remaining two tablespoons of olive oil over the spinach. Season the spinach with salt and pepper.

Place the dressed spinach onto each slider bottom, followed by a halibut patty. Top it off with barbecue sauce. Top with the slider lid.




An Invitation to Wellness

For me, there is a special clarity that comes from being outside in Alaska's winter landscape — whether it's a brisk walk along the beach, a slow snowshoe trek through our old-growth forest, or even a moment by the wood stove looking out at the silent bay. I bundle up, breathe in the crisp winter air, and let the surroundings remind me that true wellness can be found in the silence and splendor of the great outdoors.

I encourage you to take time for a simple, soul-filling activity in nature. Walk outside, wherever you might be, and find a tree that draws you in. Get to know it — run your hand along its bark, notice its shape, feel how its roots anchor it to the earth. Let this be “your tree.” Sit at the base of the tree if you are able. Embrace the stillness and observe the subtle sounds around you: the quiet rustle of branches, the gentle crinkle of snow underfoot, or the hush of the wind. Take your time, breathe with the tree, and allow yourself to soak up the calm it offers. Taking the time to listen to nature's steady rhythm can reveal secrets you might never notice otherwise.

Wellness isn't just about the food we prepare or consume — it's about maintaining our connection to the wild places that sustain us. We can always find the miracles of the natural world, no matter where we are.

— Mandy Dixon




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Finding Light

in the Heart of Winter

By Monica Haim-Kallenberg



“But the lake of ice was more than just a natural rink for skating. It was a testament and a testimony — to finding joy in the freeze of winter...”

One of the most inspiring and entertaining aspects of my marriage to Arron (Wild Alaskan Company Founder + CEO) is the vault of remembrances from his upbringing in rural Alaska. A trove of moments as distinctive as they are wild, slivers of a silver-hued reality forever engulfed in snow, sky and star. Anecdotes that paint pictures for me of his youth, of true kinship to earth and sea.

I especially love the tale of how during the long winter, Arron and his sister would eagerly wait for the lake near their home to freeze, a metamorphic climax when water seizes up into mass, yielding a vastness of ice on which their skates would carve the dance of speed through winter’s time. Upon this white patch of earthen frost, the siblings would revel in the absoluteness of a perfect silence, moments void of all sound — except for that of skate blade on ice — yet indeed rife with lived experience.

But the lake of ice was more than just a natural rink for skating. It was a testament and a testimony — to finding joy in the freeze of winter, even with limited hours of sunlight. To living it up fully despite the circumstances, even if it meant having to bundle up in every

single layer they owned. To transforming a challenging season into a haven of memories. To sharing experiences that the two of them would never forget — held by their love for one another, rooted by the glory of their home state, Alaska, and anchored to the cycles within which this wild place radiates said glory.

As we glide through our own winter experiences, I invite us all to take our cues from those two young Kallenegs: to glide fiercely across the expanse of possibilities for how we engage with the world around us.

And upon returning to the warmth of our kitchens, here are a few recipes — from our forthcoming cookbook — to nurture us:

Smoky Seafood Corn Chowder

Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients

- 2 (6 ounce) portions White Alaska Pollock Quick Cuts
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups potatoes, diced
- ½ cup carrots, diced
- ½ cup onions, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or a few sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 4 cups water, seafood stock, or veggie stock
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce or fish sauce
- 1 cup corn, fresh or frozen
- Tender green herbs like parsley and dill, chopped, for serving

In Alaska, chowder may as well be served on tap — you will find it everywhere. There is truly no meal that tastes more like the essence of Alaska than a hearty bowl of seafood chowder. Finished with a touch of cream, this pescatarian-friendly seafood chowder is a quick, cozy meal perfect for a chilly night. It features a few classic components — corn, potatoes, herbs — but the addition of smoked paprika gives it an umami-rich finish

In a medium pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the potatoes, carrots, and onions to the pot and cook until onions have softened, about 7 minutes.

Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Add the thyme, bay leaf, salt, smoked paprika, and water or stock to the pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Cook for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and liquid has reduced about a third.

Stir in the heavy cream and add Worcestershire sauce or fish sauce. Taste to adjust seasoning, then add corn.

Return to a simmer, then stir in the fish. Continue to simmer, gently poaching until just cooked through and flaky, about 5 minutes.

Divide between four bowls. Top with fresh herbs to finish. Enjoy while warm.



THE FOLLOWING RECIPES ARE FROM
OUR FORTHCOMING COOKBOOK,
“EAT WILD: COOKING AT
HOME WITH THE SEAFOOD
OF ALASKA”

Seared Pacific Halibut with Creamy Peppercorn Sauce

Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients

2 (6 ounce) portions Pacific halibut

Salt

High-heat cooking oil

¼ cup water

1 tablespoon light miso paste

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

2 tablespoons brandy, white wine, or vegetable stock

¼ cup heavy cream

2 teaspoons coarsely ground or cracked black peppercorns

Since my husband Arron is a pescatarian, I'm always on the lookout for meals that satisfy the way a meat-forward alternative might. The creamy peppercorn sauce in this dish is inspired by a classic French bistro dish called *steak au poivre*. But in this pescatarian version, the sauce is made with light miso paste as its base, giving it an umami-rich flavor profile.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Pat the fish dry with paper towels. Season both sides with salt and black pepper.

Add enough high-heat cooking oil to cover the bottom of hot pan. When oil is sizzling hot, lower fish into the skillet. Sear until first side is golden brown, then flip when it releases easily from the skillet with a fish spatula, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium. Sear for about 3 to 4 more minutes depending on the thickness of the fillet. Pacific halibut is medium-done when the thickest part of the fillet registers at 130°F on an instant-read thermometer, or when flaked easily with a fork. Add a minute or two of cook time as desired. Transfer to a serving plate and set aside.

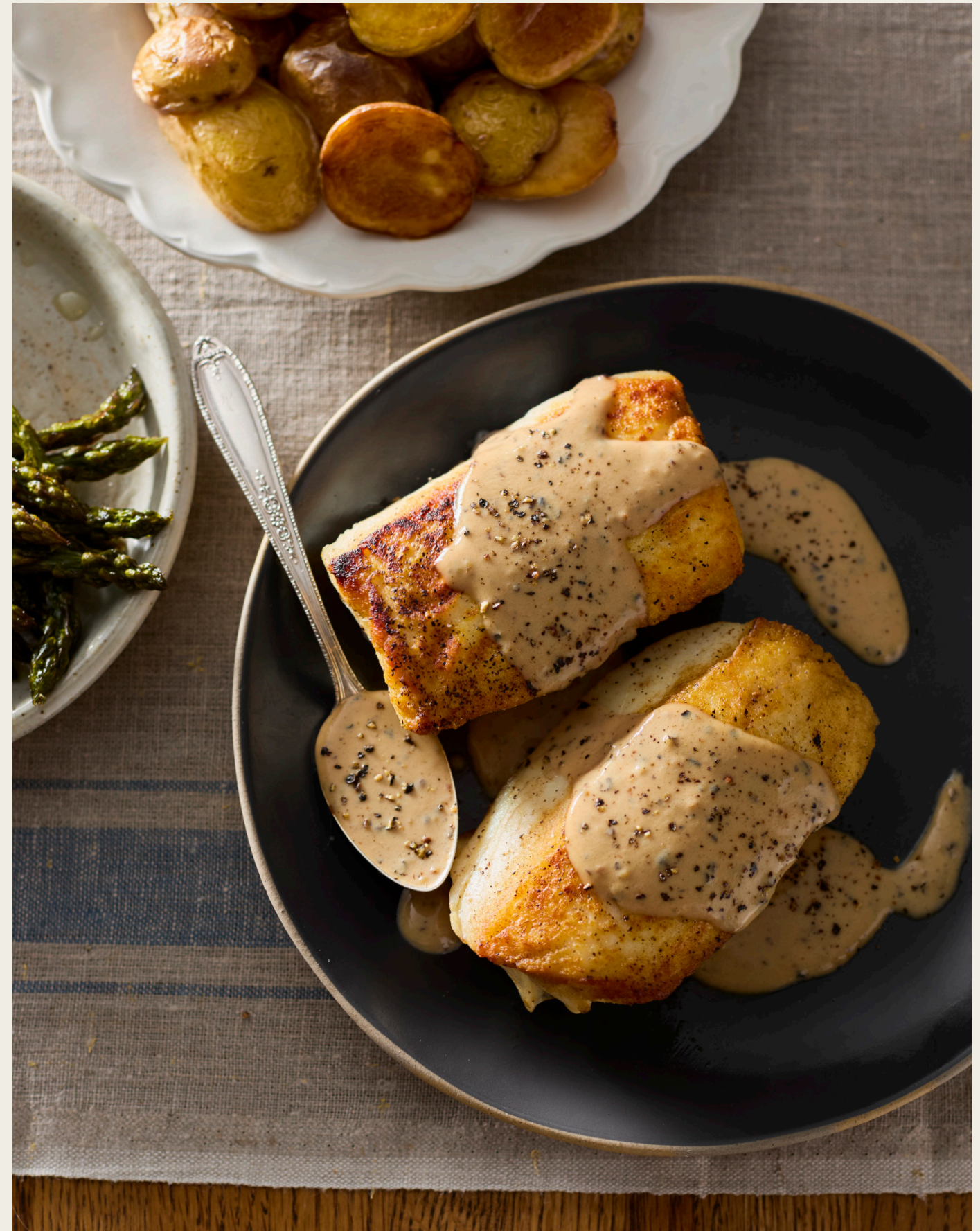
Drain excess oil from skillet, then lower the heat to medium. Remove from the heat to allow it to cool off if needed. Meanwhile, in a small mixing bowl, whisk together water and miso paste. Set aside.

Make the sauce: Return the skillet to the hot burner, then add butter to the pan. When butter starts bubbling, carefully add white wine/stock/brandy and bring to a simmer. (If cooking over a flame, you may want to move the pan from the heat while adding alcohol to avoid flare-ups.) Use a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits from bottom of the pan. Cook for 1 minute to allow alcohol to evaporate.

Add the miso mixture to the pan, bringing to a rapid simmer. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until sauce reduces by half.

Whisk in the heavy cream and peppercorns and simmer for another 2 minutes or until sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Taste to adjust seasoning, adding more peppercorns and/or salt if desired.

Divide the portions between two plates. Spoon the sauce over the fish while still warm. Serve with roasted potatoes or asparagus.



King Salmon With Tart Blackberry Mustard

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

4 (6 ounce) portions red king salmon

1 ½ tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard

2 teaspoons garlic, minced

Blackberry preserves, to taste

A mix of minced fresh herbs like dill,
tarragon, or thyme

½ pound broccolini or asparagus

Extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and ground black pepper

In Alaska, homemade jarred preserves are a way of life, serving as living reminders of shared experiences during harvests gone by. In this way, they do more than nourish — they document, chronicle and remind. Jarred preserves (which, in this case, can also be store-bought) are also the key to this glazy preparation of salmon. Blackberry preserves have a nice balance of sweet and tart, but you should feel free to experiment with other jarred jams — lingonberry, cranberry, or even rich fig preserves can be whisked into a delicious mustard glaze.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Meanwhile, combine the mustards, garlic, preserves, and herbs in a small bowl. Taste and adjust by adding more preserves if desired, then set aside.

Pat the fillets dry with a clean kitchen towel or paper towels. Place the fillets skin-side down on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Arrange the vegetables in a single layer alongside fish. Drizzle everything with olive oil to coat, ensuring that the bottom of the fillets get lightly greased, then season the fish and vegetables with salt and pepper.

Spoon the mustard mixture onto each fillet, spreading on top as well as the sides. Allow the fish to marinate for 10 minutes while oven preheats.

Transfer the baking sheet to the oven for about 10 to 12 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets. Salmon is medium-rare when the thickest part of the fillet registers at 120°F on an instant-read thermometer, or when flaked easily with a fork. Add a minute or two of cook time as desired.

Divide each portion among four plates. Serve alongside roasted vegetables.



