

Alaska Salmon with Vegetable-Bread Stuffing



Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Servings: 6 to 8

Ingredients:

1 whole Alaska salmon (dressed), fresh or thawed

Salt and pepper, to taste

Lemon half

Stuffing:

1 box (6 oz.) herb-flavored stuffing mix

1/2 cup hot water

1/4 cup crisp, crumbled bacon or pancetta

3 Tablespoons reserved bacon drippings or olive oil, divided

1 medium leek, white and light part only (about 1 cup), halved lengthwise, then sliced

Half of a small peeled celery root (about 1-1/2 cups), cut in 1/2-inch dices*

2 Tablespoons each chopped parsley and lemon zest

12 to 16 oz. fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut in 2-inch pieces

Description:

Remove Alaska salmon from refrigerator 15 minutes before cooking. Heat oven to 400°F. Cut 2 pieces of aluminum foil large enough to wrap around salmon lengthwise. Stack the foil sheets (shiny side down) on a baking sheet.

Stir stuffing mix, water and bacon in a medium bowl; set aside. Add 2 tablespoons bacon drippings (or olive oil) to a large frying pan. Stir in leeks and celery root; sauté 3 to 5 minutes, until leeks are softened. Transfer cooked vegetables, parsley, zest and asparagus to stuffing mix; stir to combine.

Rinse salmon under cold water, thoroughly rinsing belly cavity; pat dry with paper towel. Place salmon on foil sheets. Brush or rub remaining drippings/oil on both sides of the salmon; season with salt and pepper. Cut 3 to 4 slits, crosswise, into the skin of the salmon, deep enough to almost reach the bone. Loosely stuff salmon cavity with half to 3/4 of stuffing mixture, allowing remaining stuffing to set on the foil around the belly of the fish. Squeeze lemon juice onto fish. Bring foil ends up and crimp to close (leave room for heat circulation inside), forming a sealed packet.

Transfer the foil packet and baking sheet to the preheated oven and roast for 25 to 35 minutes, cooking just until salmon is opaque throughout. Remove from the oven and let rest a few minutes before serving. Serve salmon with stuffing.

*NOTE: 1 cup of diced celery may be substituted for celery root.

Variation: Salmon can be grilled at medium-high heat (400°F). Carefully transfer foil packet to the center of the preheated grill. Close grill cover and cook for 30 to 40 minutes, just until fish is opaque throughout. Be sure to let the salmon rest a few minutes before serving.

