

## Summer Seafood Feasts

'TIS THE SEASON TO PLUNGE INTO SEAFOOD

Victoria Rose



West Chester Seafood Kitchen

**H**OT SUMMER DAYS CALL FOR FRESH, BRIGHT flavors that tantalize the tastebuds and pair well with freshly picked produce. Basically, the perfect time to enjoy seafood. Whether you're a master angler, fishing off a boat, spending a lazy day crabbing or taking the easy route and hitting the local fish market, seafood options this time of year provide endless inspiration.

And because seafood has the advantage of cooking quickly, it's a great option for easy summer dinners. Cook it outside on the grill, quickly sear it in a hot pan or prepare your choice ahead of time and served chilled. Easy peasy summer meals.

"Fish is relatively easy to prepare — the key is to not overcook it," said Michael McNutt, Executive Chef of **West Chester Seafood Kitchen** at West Chester's Hotel Indigo. McNutt serves fresh fish daily in his restaurant — from lobsters flown in each morning to be picked for stuffed lobster rolls to seasonal catches from nearby waterways. "I grew up fishing and crabbing and always had a taste for seafood," he said.

The options for seafood-centered meals can be highly local, such as sharing the Maryland tradition of feasting on bushels of blue crabs smothered in Old Bay. The crabs are served in piles on paper-covered tables, to be picked over for hours while laughing with friends and sipping cold drinks. At West Chester Seafood Kitchen, you'll find local blue or jumbo lump crabmeat is served, when in season, in crab cakes, dips or other seasonal specials.

Seafood is also endlessly adaptable, making it perfect for home cooks wanting to experiment. Try using your favorite sauces and preparations on the most seasonal and freshest seafood available. "Incorporate a lot of good ingredients," said McNutt. "Fish provides a nice blank slate to work with, and you can create healthy takes with seasonal produce."



Assortment of dishes at West Chester Seafood Kitchen

Remember, preparation is key for seafood. First, make sure you know where your seafood comes from and that it's fresh. If you catch it yourself, clean it properly. Filleting, opening shells or picking crabs and lobsters are art forms, so it's well worth investing in proper equipment and watching tutorials to learn the best techniques. When in doubt, a cut-resistant glove can be your best friend! Or, as many prefer, buy fish already scaled, cleaned and filleted from your local fishmonger.

To keep things simple, remember most types of seafood require little more than a quick grill or sauté, some oil or butter, salt and pepper, and maybe a squeeze of lemon. But the options are endless.

Take inspiration from these more elaborate restaurant recipes. This August, keep an eye out for seasonal, sustainable ingredients, and the world is your oyster (or seafood of choice)!

### Sesame Seared Ahi Tuna

*This stunning preparation is perfect for a summer appetizers!*



Serves 2 to 4

- 1 oz. white sesame seeds
- 1 oz. black sesame seeds
- 7 oz. fresh-cut sushi-grade yellowfin tuna steak
- 1 T. sesame oil
- 2 oz. wonton crisps (store-bought is fine)
- 2 oz. honey sriracha glaze (see recipe below)
- 2 oz. wakame (seaweed salad, store-bought is fine)
- 2 oz. green onion, thinly sliced

In a wide shallow dish, mix white and black sesame seeds. Press tuna into dish to cover on all sides with mixed sesame seeds. Set aside.

In a saute pan, add sesame oil and set over medium-high heat. Once the pan is hot and the oil is shimmering, place tuna steak into the pan and sear on each side for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and rest for 5 minutes.

Slice tuna in quarter-inch slices. On a serving platter, put out crispy wontons, then top with sliced tuna. Drizzle with honey sriracha glaze. Top with wakame and green onion and serve.

### Honey Sriracha Sauce

*Sweet and spicy, this sauce goes well with many types of fish, meat and noodle dishes. For an easy preparation, make in a large glass jar, shake well and store in the refrigerator.*

Makes 3 cups

- 1 C. sriracha hot chili sauce
- 1 C. honey

- ½ C. hoisin sauce
- ¼ C. rice wine vinegar
- 1 T. sesame oil



Place all ingredients in a blender. Mix well on high speed until fully combined.

Serve or transfer to a sealed container and store in refrigerator.

### Roasted Parmesan Garlic-Herb Oysters

*An updated take on a classic!*



Makes 6 oysters



4 oz. toasted panko crumbs  
3 oz. fresh basil, chiffonade (cut in long, thin strips)  
1 oz. melted butter  
1 oz. Calabrian chili, crushed  
6 fresh-shucked large Chesapeake Bay oysters  
3 oz. garlic-herb butter (see recipe below)  
1 T. lemon zest  
3 oz. lemon juice  
6 T. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano  
2 oz. fresh dill, finely chopped  
1 oz. chives, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 375°. Mix toasted panko, 1.5 oz. fresh basil, melted butter and Calabrian chili. Set aside.

Place shucked clean oyster halves on a baking sheet. Add ½ oz. garlic-herb butter, pinch of lemon zest, ½ oz. lemon juice, 1 T. Parmigiano-Reggiano, and pinch of dill to each oyster. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.

Carefully remove oysters from oven and place on serving dish. Coat each oyster with panko mixture and sprinkle with chives. Serve immediately.

Garlic-Herb Butter

*This makes a large quantity of herb butter that can be used for many dishes. It can also be portioned and frozen for future recipes.*

Makes about 1½ cups

1½ C. butter (3 sticks), softened (NOT melted)  
¼ C. garlic, chopped  
½ lemon, juiced  
1 T. white wine  
1 T. fresh parsley leaves, picked and chopped  
1 T. kosher salt  
¾ tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
⅙ tsp. crushed red pepper  
½ T. grated romano cheese

Put all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Using clean hands, blend well, making sure to incorporate all the liquid into the butter along with the dry ingredients.

Place into a container, label, date and store to use as needed.

Pan-Seared Striped Bass with Rock Shrimp Pearl Couscous & Citrus Vinaigrette

*Commonly known as rockfish regionally, this fish is simple to cook. Use this recipe as a starting point for your own variations.*

Serves 4

1 C. shrimp stock  
1 C. pearl couscous  
1 T. butter  
3 oz. Florida rock shrimp

½ C. heirloom cherry tomatoes  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
1 T. fresh basil, chiffonade  
¼ C. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano  
1 tsp. fresh ground black pepper  
1 tsp. kosher salt  
1 tsp. chives, chopped  
1 T. olive oil  
4, 6–7 oz. fresh striped bass fillets, seasoned with salt and pepper  
3 oz. citrus vinaigrette (recipe below)  
1 sprig fresh dill  
Optional: lemon slices, sliced half through and twisted



To make couscous:

In medium pot, bring shrimp stock to a boil, then add couscous. Reduce heat to medium, stir well and cover. Cook couscous for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente.

Remove from heat and set aside.

In saute pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add rock shrimp and cook for about 5 minutes until cooked through.

Remove from heat and add to couscous. Add tomatoes, lemon zest and juice, basil, Parmigiano-Reggiano, black pepper, salt and chives, and stir to combine.

To cooked striped bass:

Heat olive oil in saute pan over medium-high heat. Season bass with salt and pepper on each side. Place fish in hot pan and sear on

Seasonal Cocktails

Summer seafood feasts call for freshly shaken drinks! Whether a cocktail, mocktail or craft brew, seasonal options will enhance your meal.

Spicy Margarita

*This one takes some advance preparation — infusing the tequila and making the simple syrup — but the spicy payoff is worth the effort!*

**For infused tequila:** In advance, infuse 2 C. Sauza Reposado Tequila with 1 jalapeño and 1 habanero pepper, sliced. (Remove the seeds for a less spicy option.) Let sit for 1 to 2 days, then strain liquid and store in airtight container. Leave the mixture longer for a more intense spicy flavor. And feel free to experiment with other pepper combinations to find your own heat and flavor profile.

**For strawberry simple syrup:** In a small heavy-bottomed pot, heat ½ C. water, ½ C. sugar and ½ C. sliced strawberries until just bubbling and sugar has fully dissolved. Set aside to let cool. Strain out strawberries, then store in a clean container. Can be refrigerated. Best used within a few days.

1 oz. pepper-infused Sauza Reposado Tequila  
½ oz. Montelobos Mezcal  
½ oz. Cointreau  
1 oz. agave nectar



each side for 5 to 6 minutes. Using a thermometer, check fish and cook to an internal temperature of 145°. Remove from pan.

To assemble:

Place couscous on serving dish. Lay seared fillets of striped bass on top.  
Drizzle with citrus vinaigrette. Garnish with sprig of fresh dill and slices of twisted lemon. Serve immediately.

Citrus Vinaigrette

*Delicious to serve with fish, salad or summer vegetables!*

Makes about 2 cups

½ C. Champagne vinegar  
2 limes, juiced  
1 lemon, juiced  
1 orange, juiced  
⅓ C. sugar  
1 T. kosher salt

½ oz. strawberry simple syrup  
½ oz. lime cordial (sweetend lime juice)

In cocktail shaker, add all ingredients and shake with ice.

Strain, then serve in cocktail glass over new ice.

Garnish with a dehydrated lime wheel.

**Optional:** Add a spicy half-rim by running a cut lime wedge over half the top edge of the glass, then lightly rolling in Tajin Clásico Seasoning.

Indigo Club

*A twist on the Club Classic, this cocktail is meant to be served cold and enjoyed fresh.*

2 oz. Empress gin  
½ oz. strawberry simple syrup, (see recipe above)  
½ oz. fresh-squeezed lemon juice  
¼ oz. dry vermouth  
½ oz. triple sec (30 proof)  
1 egg white  
Optional garnishes: blackberry, raspberry, edible orchid

In cocktail shaker without ice, hard-shake all ingredients, including egg white, for at least 30 seconds. Add ice, then re-shake hard. Strain into coupe-style cocktail glass.

Garnish with blackberry and raspberry on a cocktail pick. Add an edible orchid (optional). Serve immediately.

**For mocktail recipes, see our April 2025 article, “Don’t Mock Mocktails,” online.**



1 T. freshly ground black pepper  
2 T. shallots, finely diced  
1 C. olive oil

Add all ingrdients — except olive oil — to blender. Turn on at high speed and blend for 3 minutes.

While blending, slowly add olive oil in a thin stream through blender cap to emulsify mixture until completely incorporated.

Use immediately, or store in a clean jar and refrigerated for use within a few days. Shake well again before serving. ♦

*Victoria Rose is an editor, writer and fan of all things creative. As soon as she could hold a wooden spoon, she started cooking with her mother, a former chef, and never stopped. Victoria spent the pandemic cooking, baking and posting food videos online, loves spending time in the kitchen testing new recipes with her children, and is always searching for unique additions for her vintage cookbook collection.*



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