



1840 Farm

PAN SEARED COD OR HALIBUT WITH LEMON BUTTER SAUCE

A NOTE ABOUT OUR RECIPES

The recipes we share have been made many times here at the farmhouse. In all cases, I have made them at least three times, adjusting them along the way if needed. Then I make them once or twice in their final form to make sure that the results are delicious and consistent.

My family members step in and make the final recipe to make sure that they are easy to understand and follow. Our Farmhouse Kitchen Recipe Testers are invited to make them and share their ideas and suggestions with us. Once they pass those tests, they are ready for you to give them a try.

We do our very best to ensure that there are no mistakes, omissions, or typos in our recipes. We're not perfect, so every once in a while, we miss something. We hope that you'll let us know if you find one so that we can make a correction and improve the recipe.

I believe that there's no "right" way to make a recipe, just my way and your way. I hope that you'll use our recipes as a guide to help you find your own unique way to make each one. Or, if you prefer, you can follow the recipe without making any changes.

Substitute ingredients to meet your dietary needs and preferences. Use the kitchen equipment you have on hand even if it differs greatly from what I use. Modify the instructions if it suits you or if you simply find an easier way to achieve the same result.

I hope that you'll tell me about the adjustments you make and how our recipes work for you in your kitchen. Your comments will help me to improve our recipes which makes it easier for other readers to create them successfully in their own kitchens.

I can't wait to hear what you think of this one!

Tools and Ingredients to Make this Recipe as Written



- Pan with lid
(A nonstick pan with a tempered glass lid is perfect for this recipe)
- Flexible spatula

- Halibut or Cod filets
(around 6 ounces each)
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Olive oil
- Lemon
- Butter
- Fresh dill (optional)

Click here to learn about the [tools](#) we use in the kitchen and ingredients we stock in our [pantry](#).

RECIPE NOTES

I'm a tinkerer by nature. I am forever imagining ways that I can improve a recipe or remove unnecessary steps from the instructions. I'm also prone to deciding on a whim to adjust a recipe to fit the ingredients I happen to have on hand in the pantry and refrigerator.

My want to be nimble in the kitchen leads to me making notes on nearly any recipe I make no matter how many times I have made it. Perhaps I learned this from my grandmother who would make handwritten notes on recipes she clipped from the local newspaper. She would write, "tastes good", "looks beautiful", or "needed more time in the oven" on those recipes so that she could use her own notes as her guide the next time she made it.

I still have her recipes in the recipe box I made for her when I was about ten years old. There's something about her handwritten notes that make them feel like a bit like a timecapsule of my childhood and part of the cultivation of my lifelong love of baking. I hope that my children will feel the same way about my handwritten recipe notes. I also hope that you'll make your own notes and make changes to my recipes to make them uniquely your own.

Have questions about this recipe?

Want to tell us what you think of this recipe or how you changed the recipe to make it your own?

You can send us a [message](#) or post a comment on our [blog](#), [Facebook](#), or [Instagram](#).



This dish comes together quickly and easily, making it perfect for a busy weeknight. From start to finish, the fish will be cooked and ready to plate in less than 30 minutes. The fish is beautiful served with bright yellow lemon slices and makes a flavorful, light, and healthy main course.

I like to serve this dish with steamed rice and broccoli. It is also well suited for pairing with roasted vegetables or a crisp salad with a loaf of crusty bread.

There are two schools of thought when making pan seared fish. The first cooks the fish for a few minutes and then carefully flips it over to brown the other side. The second places the fish in the pan, puts a lid on to help trap the heat and humidity, and cooks it through without ever flipping the fillet.

Flipping the fish creates a seared, browned surface on the top and bottom of the cooked fish. Choosing not to flip the fish only browns the bottom surface.

There's nothing wrong with either method. It's really a matter of preference. You should choose the one that best suits your cooking style, the equipment you use when cooking fish, and your desired end result.

I prefer the second method that doesn't require me to flip the filets. White fish filets are prone to breaking apart when you flip them, so cooking them without flipping eliminates that possibility. It also means that I have more time to prepare the side dishes and set the table. It's just easier for me to prepare them this way.

The time needed to cook your fish will depend on many factors. The thickness of your filets, the number of filets added to the pan, and the heat of the pan will all help determine how much time is needed to fully cook your fish. Use this recipe as a guide, and then adjust the cooking time as needed.

You will be able to visually determine that the fish is fully cooked when it becomes opaque and begins to flake apart on its own or when pierced with a fork or the tip of a sharp paring knife.

WHAT TYPE OF COOKWARE SHOULD YOU USE?

NONSTICK SKILLET

If you have a large nonstick skillet with a lid, this is a perfect recipe to put it to good use. The nonstick surface makes the work of removing the cooked fish from the pan much easier. There's no worry about the fish sticking to the pan and no need to add extra oil to prevent it from sticking.

CAST IRON SKILLET

A cast iron skillet with a lid can also be used. Take the time to properly preheat the skillet before adding the oil and bringing it up to temperature. Properly heating the skillet and then the oil will help to lower the chance of the fish sticking to the skillet as it cooks.

TIGHT FITTING LID

A tempered glass lid is perfect for this recipe. As the fish cooks, you will have the ability to visually check the doneness of the fish fillet without removing the lid and allowing the heat and steam to escape. Of all the recipes I make, this is the one that best takes advantage of having a glass lid to cover the skillet.

If you don't have a nonstick skillet with a lid, there's no need to add one to your kitchen solely for this recipe. While a nonstick skillet can make this recipe a bit easier to remove from the pan, the lid is the more important piece of equipment. By cooking this fish with a lid, the trapped steam will help to cook the top surface of the fish and also prevent the fish from drying out as it cooks.

I have made this recipe in a stainless skillet, and cast iron pan with delicious results, and so can you.

PAN SEARED COD OR HALIBUT

WITH LEMON BUTTER SAUCE

This dish is light and flavorful. It requires very little prep work, making it perfect for a busy weeknight.

Ingredients (Serves Two)

2 halibut or cod filets, around 6 ounces each
salt
black pepper
1 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
1 lemon, sliced thinly
1-2 tablespoons butter
fresh dill (optional)

Instructions

This recipe can be prepared with a skinless filet of fish or one with the skin attached. If you prefer a skinless filet, the skin can be carefully removed using a sharp, thin knife.

Prep the fish filets by patting them dry with a paper towel. Remove as much moisture as possible from the exposed surfaces of the fish. Season the fish liberally with salt and pepper.

Wash the lemon and remove the ends. Slice the lemon into thin slices. Remove and discard any seeds. If you prefer smaller pieces of lemon, you can cut the slices into halves or quarters.

Warm the skillet over medium high heat for about 4 minutes. Add a tablespoon (or two if using a pan without a nonstick surface) of olive oil to the pan and swirl to fully coat the bottom of the pan. Allow the oil to warm for a minute or two. The oil should be hot enough for the oil to shimmer, but not smoke.

Carefully add the fish pieces to the pan in a single layer with the skin side (or side where the skin was attached) down. Lay the fish down gently to prevent the hot oil from splashing up and out of the pan. Take care not to crowd the filets in your pan.

Reduce the heat to medium and place the lid on the pan to hold in the heat and humidity. Cook for 5 minutes. Remove the lid and check the progress of the filets.

The bottom surface should begin to caramelize. The top should turn opaque and the filet should flake apart when probed with a sharp paring knife or fork. See the note for a simple way to check the doneness.

If the fish is not opaque and easy to flake apart, simply replace the lid and give it another 1-2 minutes before checking again for doneness. Repeat until the fish is cooked through.

When the fish have reached the opaque and flaky stage, reduce the heat to low. Add a tablespoon of butter and a few thin slices of lemon for each serving of fish to the pan. Swirl the pan a bit to distribute the melted butter across the surface of the pan.

Cook uncovered, for a minute or two. The butter will combine with the accumulated moisture in the pan and the lemons to create a delicious and flavorful sauce. See the note on this page about making this sauce two different ways to decide how you would like to make your lemon butter sauce.

Remove the pan from the heat. Taste the lemon butter sauce, adding salt and pepper to taste or fresh dill if desired.

Tilt the pan slightly and use a large spoon to capture some of the pan sauce. Baste it over the top surface of the fish. Using a flexible spatula, gently remove the fish from the pan to a plate. Top with additional sauce from the skillet and lemon slices if you like.

I like the slight bitter acidity of the lemon slices with the fish, but I have other family members who prefer just the sauce without the lemon slices. The lemon butter sauce and lemon slices are also a delicious topping for steamed rice served with this dish.

A Few Notes about this Recipe

WHAT TYPE OF FISH CAN I USE?

I like to prepare this recipe with cod or halibut because they are easy to source here in New England. You can substitute your preferred type of white fish when making this recipe. If fresh fish is difficult to source, you can use frozen filets that have been fully thawed before cooking.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THE FISH IS DONE?

Use the tip of a fork or a paring knife to probe the thickest part of the fish filet at a 45 degree angle. Pull straight up to determine if the fish is flaky and fully cooked.

ONE SAUCE TWO DIFFERENT WAYS

The lemon butter sauce is made directly in the skillet once the fish has cooked through. It can be made in two different ways using the same ingredients based on your preference. Both are delicious.

For a mild, lightly flavored sauce, cook the lemon slices for a minute or two before removing them and discarding. Serve the fish with the lemon sauce spooned over the top.

For a bold lemon flavor, you can cook the lemons for 4-5 minutes in the pan. They will soften up and release more of their flavor into the butter. Serve the fish with butter and lemon slices spooned over the top.

A TIP FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

Cooking fish can fill your house with a lingering aroma. I find that saving any leftover lemon slices from this recipe and placing it in a small bowl with a few tablespoons of baking soda helps to mitigate the odor a bit. I leave the bowl in the kitchen near the stove overnight and then use the lemon and baking soda to scrub the kitchen sink clean the next day.



1840 Farm

CREAM PUFF CAKE

Thanks to our sponsors and subscribers, we are able to focus on producing fresh new content to share with you. We are grateful for your support.

Thank you for being a Farmhouse Friends Subscriber We have delicious plans in the works for the next slate of recipes we'll be sharing with you, but we welcome your requests and suggestions. If there's a new recipe you would like to see us cover or an old recipe from our blog's archive you would like us to revisit and update, please let us know. We'd love to hear what you'd like to cook and bake together!

Everyone is welcome at 1840 Farm. Our [blog](#), [recipe collection](#), and [Mercantile Shop](#) are always open and waiting for you to stop by for a visit.

We hope to see you soon.

Let's be social. You can find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#).