

Pancetta Infused Panko Crusted Halibut with Spinach and Myer Lemon & Thyme Beurre Blanc



Ingredients

2 - 5 ounce portions of skinless Halibut Filet

For the Crust

¼ Cup Panko

1 inch piece of a slice of Pancetta or good quality bacon

For the Spinach

3 ounces Pancetta (or bacon) sliced and cut into bite size pieces

2 cups baby spinach

For the Beurre Blanc

1 Meyer Lemon (or regular) juiced

3 tbsp white wine

1 small shallot finely diced (about 2 TBSP)

¼ Cup Cold Butter, cut into cubes

1 Tsp Fresh Thyme Leaves

This dinner seems quite complicated at first glance, but if you are organized, it gets easier, and if you do parts of it ahead of time, it's easier still. You can make the Bacon Panko crust as much as a day ahead of time and have it prepped ready to go. You can also make the base for the beurre blanc well ahead of time as well. That preparation will make things way easier for any cook. This recipe will follow the timing I used.

1. 2 hours before dinner, make the crust by heating a small skillet over medium heat and then add the 1 inch slice of Pancetta or Bacon to cook until the fat has rendered out. Now add the Panko to the skillet and cook, tossing from time to time until the Panko has browned. Remove from heat, pour the Panko into a bowl, remove the piece of Bacon and reserve crumbs until needed.
2. Now make the base for the Beurre Blanc sauce by adding the lemon juice, wine and shallot to a small pot over medium heat. Let it simmer until there is about 1 TBSP of liquid remaining and remove from the heat. Strain out the shallot, wash your pot and add the liquid back in along with the Thyme leaves and set aside until needed later.
3. Slice the Pancetta into ¼ inch wide pieces (bite size) and add to a skillet over medium heat. Cook until just crispy and the fat has rendered out. Remove the skillet from the heat, drain the excess fat and reserve the Pancetta in a small bowl until needed.
4. Wash the spinach so that it is ready to go.
5. 15 minutes before you want to really start this dinner, take the Halibut out of the fridge and set on the counter to come to room temperature.
6. Preheat your oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

You are now going to get serious about things. You will need 2 skillets, one oven proof, and the pot that your base for the beurre blanc sauce is in.

7. Heat the skillet for the fish over high heat. Let it get so hot you can just see little wisps of smoke coming off it. Add 1TBSP of canola or Grapeseed Oil to the skillet. Generously season the presentation side of the Halibut with salt and add it to the skillet salt side down, and let it cook without touching it for 90 seconds. Then place the skillet, still don't touch the fish, into the oven to bake for 8 minutes.
8. When the fish goes into the oven, heat the beurre blanc base over medium low heat. Once warm, using a whisk, start to combine the butter just a piece or two at a time. Keep whisking until all the butter has melted and combined with the base. It should be silky smooth. Once done, remove from the heat, set aside in a warm place and wait until the fish is cooked.
9. Heat the second skillet, the one you cooked the Pancetta in, over medium heat, add the Pancetta back in along with the Spinach and cook just until the Spinach is wilted and remove from the heat. Pile the cooked Spinach in the centre of two plates.
10. At the 8-minute mark, take your skillet with the fish out of the oven. If you have a meat thermometer, check it, it needs to be about 110 degrees. A little higher is fine. If you don't have a thermometer, visually look to see if the fat is starting to cook out and solidify on the outer edges, that's a sign it's ready.
11. Turn the fish over so the cooker side faces up and place on top of the Spinach in the centre of the plates.
12. Whisk the sauce one last time, taste it to see if it needs any salt, season to your liking and spoon around the fish on the plate
13. Sprinkle some of the bacon infused Panko on top and serve.