

## Cedar Planked Braided Salmon

*Bruno Cantieni*

*Cedar-Plank Braided Salmon with Apple Butter Sauce*



**Vegetable oil**  
**3 pounds** One side of fresh Atlantic or Pacific salmon, \*see Note 1  
**1/2 cup** Dark or amber maple syrup  
**1/4 cup** Canadian rye whiskey or maple liqueur, \*see Note 2  
**Coarse sea salt**  
**Freshly ground black pepper**  
**1/4 cup** Maple butter, \*see Note 3  
**3 tablespoons** Granulated maple sugar, \*see Note 4  
**Fresh thyme or sage springs for garnish (optional)**

Copyright: 2009

### Servings: 6

Preheat barbecue to medium heat, or oven to 350°F. Some grilling advocates advise soaking the plank in water so it doesn't burn, but you may choose not to soak the plank if you like the smokier taste that the charring wood imparts to the salmon.

Oil the cedar plank and place the salmon on it. Keeping fish intact at narrower tail end, start cutting, about one inch in from the tail end, lengthwise through the middle section (where the backbone would have been) straight to the opposite end. Repeat this motion to cut a total of seven strips that are each about 1/2" to 3/4" wide. Where the fish is intact at tail end, strips will be narrower.

Measure out half of the maple syrup and reserve. Combine remaining maple syrup with whiskey. Brush whiskey mixture all over salmon strips to generously coat. Season with salt and pepper.

To braid, mentally label the strips – starting from the left – as numbers one through seven. Starting with strip number four, lift it over strips one through three so that it is now on the outside left-hand side. Next, take strip number three and lift it over strips five through seven. Now start again, renumber the strips from one through seven; again lift (the new) strip number four to the far left and (the new) strip number three to the right. Continue in this manner until you have braided the whole length of fish. Pat the braided fish into one compact length (it should look something like the braided breads in bakeries). Either skewer the loose ends together or simply press together to keep in place.

*The salmon can either be grilled on the barbecue or baked in the oven.*

*Purchase chemical-free cedar planks from the supermarket (if your salmon is large, you can butt two cedar planks together).*

*You'll need a 16" length cedar for 3 to 4 lbs. of salmon filet.*

*1) Skin off and pin bones removed (your local fish market should do this at no charge).*

*2) Substitutes: Scotch, Bourbon, Rum*

*3) Available at farmers' markets or maple syrup farms.*

*Substitutes: Mix 2 tbsp melted butter with 2 tbsp maple syrup*

*4) Available at farmers' markets or maple syrup farms.*

*Substitutes: Coarse/ Granulated brown sugar*

*5) I place the (soaked) cedarboard on a cookie sheet and braid the salmon on top of it. Then I brush the maple syrup/ whisky marinade all over the salmon.*

*The marinade will drain into the cookie sheet and I brush this back on the salmon about every hour.*

*Marinate the salmon for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight.*

*6) I never use maple butter because it is usually too thick. I brush on the butter/ maple syrup mix instead.*

At this point, the salmon can be set on a baking sheet, covered and chilled overnight.  
(See Note 5)



To finish the salmon, pour the maple butter and reserved syrup generously over the salmon, especially into nooks and crannies. Season with (coarse sea) salt and pepper.  
(See Note 6)



To barbecue the salmon, place the plank on the grill, on the upper rack, if your barbecue has one, over medium heat; close lid (or cover salmon with foil roasting pan).

Cook for 20 to 25 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork, and internal temperature of the fish reaches 130°F.

Alternatively, to roast the salmon in the oven, place the plank on a foil lined rimmed baking sheet and bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 30 to 35 minutes.

---

Remove plank from heat; dust salmon liberally with maple sugar (optional).

Salmon may be served hot or cold right from the plank.

Garnish with fresh herbs, if using

---

Serve with chilled Apple Butter Sauce (recipe below) or your favorite mayo recipe

---

#### Apple butter sauce

1 cup mayonnaise

¼ cup apple butter

1 tsp. minced fresh tarragon, or ¼ tsp. dried

Blend the mayonnaise, apple butter & tarragon in a bowl & chill until serving time. Makes 1-¼ cups.

---