

Salt and Serenity

Pistachio- Crusted Halibut with Spicy Yogurt

(Adapted from original recipe in February 2007 issue of Gourmet Magazine.)

4 (1 1/4-inch-thick) pieces skinless halibut fillet (about 6 ounces each)
1 cup milk (any kind is fine)
1/3 cup shelled (salted or unsalted) pistachios (preferably Turkish), finely chopped
3 tablespoons cornmeal
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 1/4 cups plain yogurt (fat free is fine)
1/2 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and finely diced (3/4 cup)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon Maras or cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste

1. Line a sieve or colander with either a coffee filter or double thickness of paper towel. Add yogurt to the lined sieve and place over a bowl to catch the water that drains off. Refrigerate for about an hour. Discard the drained liquid.
2. Put fish in a shallow baking dish and pour milk over it and chill, covered, turning over once, for 30 minutes.
3. Stir together pistachios and cornmeal in a wide shallow bowl or glass pie plate.
4. Preheat oven to 400° F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Brush parchment with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Place pan in oven to heat up just before you coat the fish.
5. Remove fish from milk, letting excess drip off. Transfer to a plate and sprinkle all over with salt and pepper, then dredge lightly in cornmeal-pistachio mixture. Transfer to a clean plate as coated.
6. Transfer coated fish to hot baking sheet in oven. Bake for about 8-10 minutes until crispy and cooked through. Turn the fillets over halfway through cooking time.
7. While fish cooks, stir together all ingredients for spicy yogurt.
8. Serve fish with spicy yogurt on the side.

