



Chapter Twelve

SESAME CRUSTED TUNA WITH CUCUMBER SALAD



Gordon Ramsay Teaches Cooking II: Restaurant Recipes at Home

SESAME CRUSTED TUNA WITH CUCUMBER SALAD

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Treat tuna like you would an amazing wagyu steak—they deserve that respect.

Chapter Review

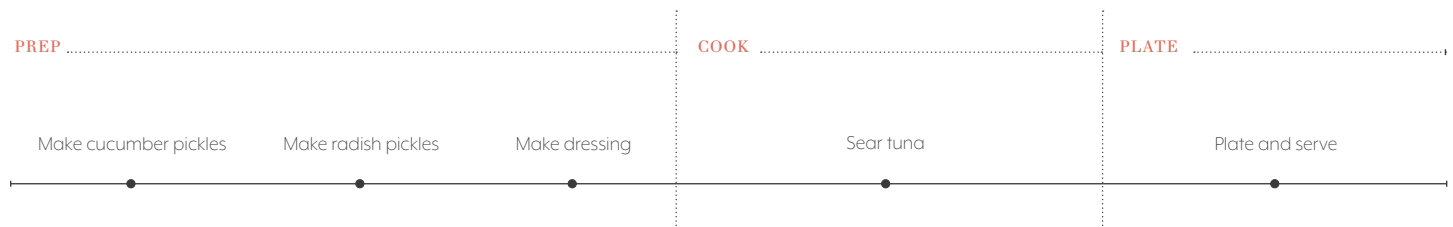
Tuna is a delicate meat with very little fat. Encrusting it with sesame seeds protects the meat during the sear and adds a nutty flavor as the seeds toast. This technique works well with other fish that have little fat and no skin, such as swordfish and mahi mahi. A whisked egg white helps the sesame seeds stick to the fish. Gordon adds lime zest to the loin under the crust and again when plating to infuse fragrance throughout the dish.

Searing happens quickly with tuna—only 30 seconds on each side over medium heat. If the pan gets too hot, add a touch of cold oil to keep the sesame seeds from burning.

Instead of lettuce for the base of this salad, Gordon uses lightly pickled cucumbers for crunch and lightly pickles them for a contrast to the toasty sesame seeds, without overpowering the tuna. Leave the skins on the cucumbers for extra crunch. If you don't have a spiralizer to create ribbons, julienne the cucumber with a mandoline, omitting the watery core. The cucumbers pickle quickly but you can also make them the night before to save yourself time the day of.

When Gordon plates, he is always looking for ways to create height. Use the cucumber “noodles” to lift the tuna slices. Once you've plated a component, try not to move it around. Place it with confidence and let it go. The more you practice, the more precise your moves will get on the first try.

RECIPE TIMELINE



SESAME CRUSTED TUNA WITH CUCUMBER SALAD

**Prep**

- The pickled cucumbers can be made up to one week in advance and stored in a mason jar. Because of the thin cut for this dish, the texture would lose its crunch beyond one week.
- The vinaigrette can be made and refrigerated until up to a week ahead of time.
- The tuna can be seared in advance and served at room temperature.

Ingredient Notes

- The best place to get sushi-grade tuna loin is from your fishmonger. Use within three to five days and never freeze.
- The pickling liquid can be stored in the refrigerator for a few weeks for about two more uses. After that it will lose its flavor and not be as potency.
- Yuzu is a sour Japanese citrus fruit with a flavor and aroma all its own but similar to a cross between grapefruit and lime. If you can't find yuzu, use lime juice and lemon juice in a 2:1 ratio (6 teaspoons lime + 2 teaspoons lemon for this recipe).
- Microgreens are the tiny, young shoots of vegetables that are often picked after just a few days of growth. They're typically packaged like fresh herbs and near the sprouts at your grocery store. They're essentially a baby version of a full grown plant and because they are so small, their nutrients are more dense than the full grown plant and their flavor is intensified in such a compact vessel. They make a pretty garnish that can add a bite of spice from mustard microgreens, sweetness from pea shoots, or nuttiness from sunflower sprouts. If you can't find microgreens use fresh herbs like parsley and chives and cut into batons, or simply omit.

Sesame Seed Crusted Tuna Loin, Pickled Cucumber Salad, Yuzu-Sesame Seed Dressing, and Microgreen Salad

Serves 4

Sesame Crusted Tuna

4 4-5-ounce tuna blocks, 1.5-inch by 2-inch
by 5-inch
2 cups untoasted white sesame seeds
2 cups black sesame seeds
1 cup egg whites
2 limes for zest
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons grapeseed oil

Mix the sesame seeds together and set aside. Season all sides of the tuna blocks with a few pinches of salt each and one twist of fresh cracked pepper on each side. In a medium sized mixing bowl, whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks. Use a pastry brush to paint a thin, even layer of whipped egg whites over the tuna flesh. Zest both limes over the tops and bottoms of the tuna. Pour the mixed sesame seeds onto a plate or sheet tray. Roll the sides and ends of the tuna into the seeds to coat. Use your hands to pack the seeds on evenly and set aside on a clean tray.

Heat grapeseed oil in a medium non-stick sauté pan over medium heat with for 3 minutes. Do not let the oil get hot to the point where it starts smoking or it will burn the sesame seeds before cooking the fish. Do not let the oil get too cold or the fish will overcook before any color is achieved.

Start with only one tuna portion at a time to get familiar with the cooking process. Set the sesame crusted tuna blocks in the oil. Tilt the sauté pan to create a reservoir of hot oil in the bottom edge of the pan, keeping the tuna loin close to the elevated edge of the pan, away from the oil.

Pickled Cucumber Salad

2 English cucumbers
1½ cups rice wine vinegar
1½ cups sugar
1½ cups water
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
1 tablespoon cilantro leaves, rough chopped
2 French Breakfast radishes, thinly sliced

Slice the ends of cucumbers off and halve cucumbers widthwise. Keep the cucumber skin on for color and texture. Spiralize one cucumber half at a time. Every spiralizer is slightly different to operate so read the directions before using. Transfer the cucumber noodles to a large mixing bowl and season lightly with salt.

Heat the water, sugar, vinegar, and coriander in a medium saucepot over medium heat until the liquid comes to a boil and the sugar dissolves. Let the pickling liquid cool completely before pouring over the cucumbers.

Sesame Seed Crusted Tuna Loin, Pickled Cucumber Salad, Yuzu-Sesame Seed Dressing, and Microgreen Salad

Serves 4

Pickled Cucumber Salad *continued*

Pour $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pickling liquid and the chopped cilantro over the spiralized cucumbers and let marinate for a minimum of 5 minutes.

Add the sliced radishes to the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pickling liquid and marinate quickly for one to two minutes right before plating.

Yuzu-Sesame Seed Dressing

1 lime, juiced and zested
2 tablespoons yuzu juice
1 tablespoon white sesame oil
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
2 teaspoons cilantro leaves, roughly chopped

In a medium sized mixing bowl, whisk together the yuzu, lime juice, and lime zest. Slowly add in the sesame seed oil and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and sprinkle in the cilantro.

Microgreens Salad

2 pinches micro chives
3 pinches micro arugula
3 pinches micro celery
3 pinches micro radish
3 pinches micro ruby sorrel

Combine all of the microgreens and reserve.

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Serves 4

Plate + Garnish

Drain the marinated cucumber noodles in a sieve over a medium sized bowl. Use a meat fork to thread $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cucumber noodles. Pull the noodles up and straighten them out while they hang from the fork. With the fork against the edge of the bowl, twist the fork away from you to roll the noodles into a nest. Bring the fork to the plate (preferably 10-inch plates for this dish) and pull off the noodle nest into the center of the dish. Repeat with the remaining three portions.

Slice the ends off the tuna, then slice the tuna into five slices each. Don't push the knife down while cutting, just rock it back and forth and gravity will do the work for you. Shingled tuna slices over the pickled cucumber noodles.

Spoon some of the dressing around the plate and then over the center of the tuna slices. Scatter marinated slices of radish randomly over the tuna. Finish with a pinch of the microgreen salad over the top of the tuna slices and a wreath of microgreen salad around the plate.

SESAME CRUSTED TUNA WITH CUCUMBER SALAD



INGREDIENTS

50ml Patrón Silver Tequila

15ml St Germain

25ml fresh kiwi juice

1 thin slice of cucumber

25ml lime juice

35ml sugar

5 basil leaves

Serve in a Sling glass

METHOD

1. Muddle the thin slice of cucumber into a shaker and add all ingredients except the basil leaves
2. Shake vigorously and double strain into a sling glass.
3. Add the basil leaves and some ice cubes.

Take It Further

- Finding a reputable source for tuna might take some time and research. Visit your local fish markets or grocery store fish counters to see what kind of tuna is available in your area. Since freshness markers differ between types of tuna and different cuts, take notes in your tasting notebook on what is available and do some research before you commit to buying.

Beverage Pairing

- Gordon recommends you pair this dish with his Botanical Sling Cocktail, a take on the classic Singapore Sling, following the recipe on the left.