

Title:

Cooking Up Kiwi Cuisine

Word Count:

532

Summary:

Stemming from its British Colonial heritage, culinary culture in New Zealand has long been characterized by straight forward fodder such as steak and fries, fish and chips and baked meats. However, driven by the demands of increasingly sophisticated tourists to the region and influenced by both Asian and Pacific flavors, New Zealand cuisine has quickly evolved to cater to gourmet tastes.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Stemming from its British Colonial heritage, culinary culture in New Zealand has long been characterized by straightforward fodder such as steak and fries, fish and chips and baked meats. However, driven by the demands of increasingly sophisticated tourists to the region and influenced by both Asian and Pacific flavors, New Zealand cuisine has quickly evolved to cater to gourmet tastes. Today's New Zealand menus combine the incredibly fresh produce, meat and seafood with an eclectic mix of indigenous plants and exotic vegetables to create complex, flavorful dishes.

Fortunately, travelers heading to these dreamy, green islands in the South Pacific don't have to wait long to indulge in a Kiwi feast. For example, Air New Zealand offers a gourmet New Zealand-inspired menu for passengers traveling in its Business Premier and Pacific Premium Economy classes. Designed by world-renowned consultant chefs, an array of authentic options are paired with fine native wines to offer travelers a glimpse of the country's culinary culture before they even hit the ground.

For a sample of New Zealand cuisine at home, try this recipe handpicked by one of the consultant chefs from Air New Zealand and currently available on all flights originating from North America.

New Zealand Glazed Snapper and Arugula Salad with Vanilla Saffron Aioli

Serves 4

4 vine-ripened tomatoes

12 baby gourmet potatoes

4 medium fillets of fresh snapper

1 cup fresh arugula

Place tomatoes on a tray of rock salt in the oven at 320° F and roast until skins begin to split.

Remove from oven and keep warm. Slice potatoes into thin slices and pan fry in olive oil with sea salt till golden and crispy.

In a large pan, fry the snapper (sprinkled with sea salt) skin-side-down until golden. Turn the fillets over to finish cooking the fish. To stop the fillets from curling up, use a fish slice to press down on the fillets as soon as they go in the pan. Hold for 20 seconds at the start.

Toss arugula in a bowl with 1 teaspoon of New Zealand or regular extra-virgin olive oil.

Arrange potato slices on warmed dinner plates and squeeze "circles" of vanilla saffron aioli around the potatoes. Place snapper on top with arugula and roast tomato to the side. Brush with lemon caramel and serve while hot.

Vanilla Saffron Aioli

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1/2 teaspoon ground New Zealand or regular saffron

1 vanilla pod or 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon fine salt

1 egg yolk

6 oz. grape seed oil

Boil the vinegar and saffron together. Cut the vanilla pod in half lengthwise and rub the seeds into fine salt. If using vanilla extract, skip this step. In a

bowl, whisk vanilla salt or extract onto the yolk, whisk in vinegar and slowly add in the oil, whisking well. Place in a bottle until ready to use. This makes it easy to serve and will keep in the fridge for up to four days.

Lemon Caramel

1/2 cup sugar

2 tablespoons water

1/2 teaspoon salt

Juice of 1 lemon

Boil sugar, water and salt till golden caramel in color. Remove from the heat and cool slightly before carefully stirring in the lemon juice. Use a pastry brush to coat the snapper fillets.

This authentic New Zealand dish can help spice up your menu.