

**Title:**

How To Give American Fare An Island Flair

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**Summary:**

Caribbean ingredients are an increasignly popular way to add island flair to tradition American fare.

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**Article Body:**

Caribbean ingredients are an increasingly popular way to add island flair to traditional American fare.

According to Rick Crossland, executive chef for Bahama Breeze restaurants and lead judge for the Caribbean Culinary Federation, "Island cuisine features bold but not overpowering flavors, many of which are very familiar to Americans, including spices like cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger, herbs like cilantro and basil and fruits like coconut and mango."

A leader in this trend is the company Crossland works for, Bahama Breeze-part of Darden Restaurants, which also owns Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Smokey Bones and Seasons 52. With lots of fresh seafood, distinctive chicken dishes and flame-grilled steaks, the 32 restaurants feature fresh ingredients indigenous to the islands. "Bahama Breeze really tries to bring the freshness and variety of the Caribbean to American dining," says Crossland. "The region's many cultural influences have led to new ways of using foods we're all familiar with, becoming what we now refer to as Caribbean cuisine."

Recently introduced items include Breeze Wood-Grilled Chicken Breast; Grilled Chicken Tostada; Spinach Dip and Island Chips; Lobster and Shrimp Pasta; and a new fresh fish sheet offering guests a choice of tilapia, salmon, mahi-mahi and more, with preparations including Almond-Crusted with lemon butter sauce, Havana with Latin caper-garlic tomato sauce and Simply Grilled with lemon-garlic-herb butter.

Here's a recipe to add island flair to your family's menu:

Breeze Wood-Grilled Chicken Breast With Orange Glaze and Citrus Butter Sauce

(Serves 2)

2 chicken breasts (8 oz, boneless, skinless)

2 Tablespoons olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1/2 cup wood chips, soaked in water for 15 minutes

1/2 cup orange glaze

1/2 cup citrus butter sauce

Lightly coat each chicken breast on both sides with olive oil, salt and pepper. Preheat a char-grill to medium heat, adding wood chips just prior to placing the chicken on the grill, or add wood chips to a charcoal grill. Grill for 6 to 7 minutes per side, flipping it over twice during the grilling process. The chicken is done when it registers 165° to 170°F on a meat thermometer, or the juices run clear when pierced with a fork. When the chicken is fully cooked, baste generously on both sides with the orange glaze. Let the chicken cook one additional minute to caramelize the glaze. Serve immediately with warm citrus butter sauce.

Orange Glaze

1/3 cup orange marmalade

3 Tablespoons orange juice, fresh squeezed

1 Tablespoon lemon juice, fresh squeezed

1/4 teaspoon salt

Place all the ingredients in a kitchen blender and pulse until smooth. Place in a clean container and refrigerate until needed for grilling.

Citrus Butter Sauce

2 teaspoons olive oil

1 Tablespoon shallots, minced

1/2 cup white wine

1/2 cup orange juice, fresh squeezed

6 Tablespoons butter cubes, cold

1 Tablespoon sugar

Salt to taste

White pepper to taste

Heat oil in a small saucepan. Add shallots and sauté for one minute. Add orange juice and white wine and reduce by 3/4. Reduce the heat to low and add butter cubes one at a time while whisking the sauce to evenly incorporate the butter; do not allow the sauce to boil. Add sugar, salt and pepper. Stir to combine, then strain the sauce through a fine mesh strainer. Serve hot.

Americans are learning to feed their island spirit with dishes such as Breeze Wood-Grilled Chicken Breast With Orange Glaze and Citrus Butter Sauce.