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Cedar-Wrapped Treasures

By Susie Iventosch



Cedar wrap salmon and swordfish Photo Susie Iventosch

In the late 1990s I became aware of the micro-finance movement and developed quite an interest in this system of giving microloans to individual entrepreneurs in developing economies. In fact, I enrolled in a week-long Microenterprise and Development seminar at Southern New Hampshire University, where I had the good fortune of attending lectures with central bankers, community development professionals and professors from all over the world-Nigeria, Uganda, Mexico, Ghana, Switzerland and the Ivory Coast, to name a few.

Microfinance is a tool for fighting poverty by providing very small, unsecured micro-loans to poor people, usually women and usually in developing nations, so they may start or expand a sustainable business.

When I learned from Ying Compestine that her recipes and cookbook were to be featured at the March 30 Lafayette Whole Foods event at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, "Local Goes Global: Party for Good", I was delighted to hear that the proceeds will go to benefit microlending projects in poor communities around the world.

"It's a good cause," Compestine said. "I know first-hand that help like this can change a person's life. It is

empowering and fosters independence."

At the upcoming event, Compestine will share her journey as a writer and as a passionate advocate for healthy living through her presentation "Asian Secrets to Ageless Living: A Writer's Journey from Two Worlds."

The dinner will feature a sampling of Compestine's recipes, carefully selected for their versatility and ability to accommodate different dietary preferences, and prepared by Whole Foods Executive Chef Marc Rubenstein. (For more information, visit : <http://www.wholeplanetfoundation.org/get-involved/campaign/asian-secrets-to-ageless-living-a-writers-journey-from-2-worlds-/>, or call Whole Foods at 925-284-5315.)

This is the nature of globalization. We can collect both friends and recipes from all over the world, while touching the lives of so many people through projects like microlending. I still communicate with a professor of economics from Uganda Martyrs University in Kampala, Uganda and a Swiss businessman turned microlender now living in the Philippines, as well as a central banker from Mexico City, all of whom I met at the 2008 seminar. Unfortunately, I have not yet garnered their favorite recipes! Oh well, there's still plenty of time!

Mediterranean Cedar-Wrapped Salmon or Swordfish

(Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

Four 6-ounce fish fillets, any skin removed and cut into pieces about 1 1/2 inches wide and thick by 6-7 inches long (Swordfish, Halibut, Salmon, Sea Bass)

1/2 cup pitted and coarsely chopped Kalamata olives

1/2 cup chopped sundried tomatoes, drained or reconstituted

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup kale leaves, torn into bite-sized pieces, or 8 large strips of kale leaves

Mushrooms (I used 1/2 package of "Brown Clamshell" organic mushrooms by Mycopia from Whole Foods)

16 pieces of carrot (3-inch julienned strips)

4 cedar paper wraps

8 pieces of kitchen string, each about 10-12 inches long

(*Note I covered the string with long pieces of chives just for the pre-cooking photo!)

DIRECTIONS

Soak cedar wraps in warm water for about 8-10 minutes to soften. Pat dry with a paper towel and lay cedar wraps out on a flat surface. Spray with cooking spray to keep contents from sticking.

In the center of each cedar wrap, place kale leaves.

In a bowl, mix olives and sundried tomatoes with garlic and olive oil. Then, spread mixture evenly over kale. Place mushrooms and carrots on top of olive mixture and then lay fish fillet over all.

Now, call anyone you can to come over to help you roll and tie the cedar wraps! Starting at one end, roll the

papers snugly around the contents (you will be able to tell which way to roll them ... there is only one way) and tightly tie the wraps in two places about halfway between center and the ends.

Cook on a preheated grill for about 12-14 minutes, turning every three or four minutes.

Remove from grill and cut strings.

Serve the whole wrap on the plate along with wild, black or red rice, braised baby carrots, salad and toasted seeded bread.

*Note- you can use whatever veggies you like and can make this dish in any style you like. The package offers an Asian version of the same dish.



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[back](#)

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