

## Cocoa-chili rubbed salmon with grilled peach salsa

### Ingredients

#### Cocoa-chili rub

- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons chili powder (ancho chili preferred)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon coconut sugar or light brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon chipotle powder (optional, for heat)

#### Salmon

- 4 salmon fillets, 5-6 ounces each, skin on, rinsed and patted dry
  - 1 tablespoon avocado or olive oil
- Vegetarian substitution:
- 4 extra-firm tofu planks, ¾-inch thick, pressed and patted dry or
  - 4 cauliflower steaks, ¾-inch thick

#### Peach salsa

- 3 firm, ripe peaches, halved and pitted
- 1 jalapeño, halved lengthwise and seeded
- ½ red onion, cut into ½-inch thick rounds (keep rounds to stay on grates)
- 1 tablespoon avocado or olive oil
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved (quartered if larger)
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Garnish

- Lime wedges
- Extra cilantro



#### Nutritional information

Total cost: \$26.52/\$6.63 per serving  
Serves: 4  
Calories: 345 per serving

## Directions

- Heat grill to medium-high (about 425°F to 450°F) with the lid closed. Scrape grates clean, then oil them by rubbing with a folded, oil-dampened paper towel held in tongs.
- In a small bowl, combine cocoa, chili powder, smoked paprika, cumin, sugar, garlic powder, cinnamon, salt and optional chipotle.
- Rub salmon fillets with 1 tablespoon oil, then press cocoa-chili rub evenly onto the flesh side.
- Brush peach halves, jalapeño and onion rounds with 1 tablespoon oil.
- Grill them cut side down over direct heat for 3 to 5 minutes per side, until soft with clear char marks.
- Pull jalapeño and onion as they finish; peaches usually need an extra minute.
- Place salmon fillets, skin side down, over direct heat.
- Close lid, grill 4 to 5 minutes until skin releases cleanly and lifts without sticking.
- Flip, grill 2 to 4 more minutes or until salmon reaches an internal temperature of 125°F to 130°F at thickest point for a moist center. If rub is browning faster than fish is cooking, move fillets to a cooler part of grill, finish with lid down.
- Move the grilled peaches, jalapeño and onion to a cutting board. Finely chop the jalapeño and onion, and roughly chop the peaches so some texture remains.
- Combine grilled fruit and vegetables in a mixing bowl with cherry tomatoes, cilantro, lime zest, lime juice and optional honey. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Rest the salmon for 3 to 4 minutes, then spoon warm salsa over each fillet.
- Finish with extra cilantro and a lime wedge. Serve right away.

Vegetarian option: For tofu or cauliflower, use full rub quantity and grill 7-9 minutes first side and 5-8 minutes second side, at 400°F .

### Tips & Techniques

- Buy salmon by feel. Look for firm flesh that springs back. Wild and farmed both work here; wild runs leaner, farmed runs slightly higher in fat and total calories.
- Fillets should be completely dry before the rub goes on. Surface moisture steams the spice crust instead of letting it set, and a dry surface grips the grate better.
- Let the skin tell you when to flip. Grilled salmon sticks until it forms a crust, then releases on its own. If it resists the spatula, give it another 30 to 60 seconds.
- Coconut and brown sugar caramelize fast over open flame. A two-zone fire (one hot side, one cooler side) gives you a place to move the fish if it browns too quickly.
- Char the fruit, do not stew it. Space on the grates and a hands-off approach are what give caramelized edges rather than a watery salsa.
- To use frozen peaches in a pinch: thaw, drain, and pat them completely dry, then grill on a perforated grill pan so they hold together. Fresh firm, ripe peaches give the cleanest char for this salsa.