

Chef's Corner: Spanish Mackerel Fish Cakes with Zesty Lime-Garlic Aioli and Pickled Ginger

January 2020

This recipe is yet another super way to repurpose your leftover broiled fish, and it is a perfect follow-on dish to Spanish Mackerel Broiled Four Ways (Aug 2019)!

Whenever we create a meal in our house, we do so with an eye toward repurposing the leftovers into new and flavorful dishes worthy of “The Instinctive Chef’s” table!

In this case, I prepared enough broiled Spanish Mackerel and mashed potatoes to ensure there would be plenty left for the next day’s zesty fish cake fiesta!

NOTE: Late season (Oct-Dec) King Mackerel works amazingly well for this recipe as well, so give it a try!

This recipe uses readily available ingredients from fridge or pantry, so it can certainly be modified to suit. I used leftover Spanish Mackerel, but I would not hesitate to use it for King Mackerel, Bluefish, Mahi, Amberjack, Wahoo, Shark, or Stingray – yes – Stingray! I also thought about chopping up the leftover steamed shrimp and adding as well – why not?

Similarly, if I did not have leftover mashed potatoes, I could substitute more finely diced day-old bread and/or bread crumbs. Other substitutes that would work include cilantro for parsley; white/yellow/red onion for scallions; etc.

I would also consider adding a chopped Thai chili to kick it up another notch – the sky is the limit when there’s no rules!



Spanish Mackerel Fish Cakes with Zesty Lime-Garlic Aioli and Pickled Ginger – Lotsa Great Flavors in Here!

Spanish Mackerel Fish Cakes:

Ingredients:

- 9 ounces chilled broiled Spanish Mackerel filets, pin bones and skin removed (if any of either remain)
- 1 cup chilled mashed potatoes (leftovers are great!)
- 1 slice 10-grain wheat bread, finely diced (day-old white or other bread works just fine!)
- 2 tablespoons breadcrumbs (or as needed to tighten-up the mixture and help it “set”)
- 3 tablespoons green onions (scallions), finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons small heart-of-celery stalks with leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons coarsely chopped capers
- 1 tablespoon Miracle Whip (or mayo)
- 1 tablespoon sour cream (or low-fat Greek yogurt)
- 2 teaspoons prepared yellow mustard
- 2 teaspoons Tabasco
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons Creole or Cajun seasoning (or Old Bay)
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (more if you want more kick!)
- ¼ cup finely shredded 5-cheddar cheese mix (optional – we just happen to like cheese!)
- 2 eggs

Directions:

Coarsely chop the mackerel fillets.

In a large mixing bowl, combine mackerel, potatoes, diced bread, celery, onion, parsley, capers, all sauces, spices, eggs, and cheese. Mix thoroughly to get a good homogeneous distribution of flavors and textures (potato masher works well). Add bread crumbs as needed for a tacky, formable consistency.

Once all ingredients are thoroughly mixed, chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to “set” the mixture.

While chilling, make the Zesty Lime-Garlic Aioli, and prepare the garnishes as described below.



Leftovers are Gold if you know what to do with them!

Broiled Spanish & Mashers are the Basis for this tasty Recipe!



Thoroughly mix ingredients and chill to set for forming patties.

Once chilled and somewhat firm, form mackerel cakes into flat patties of the desired diameter and fry to a golden brown at approximately 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

We used a deep fat fryer since we were already frying-up some homemade Filipino egg rolls, but the cakes can also be sautéed in a hot skillet using olive oil, butter, bacon grease, or any other oil of your choice.

When using a skillet, be sure to let the cakes crisp a bit before turning to ensure they hold together. Turn after about 4-5 minutes max on each side.

Plate with zesty lime-garlic aioli, and a garnish of pickled ginger, lime, and green onion – we happened to have a few leftover jumbo steamed NC shrimp to round-out the plate and dip into the Aioli!

Voila!

Zesty Lime-Garlic Aioli:

Ingredients:

- 3 heavy tablespoons mayonnaise
- Hand-squeezed juice of ½ lime
- 1 large clove garlic, crushed and finely minced
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco
- 1 small Thai chili finely chopped (optional)

Directions:

Thoroughly mix all ingredients until all spices and colors are evenly and smoothly distributed throughout the Aioli.

Feel free to tweak by adding/subtracting to get the zest and flavor desired for your palate, and for an extra kick, add the small Thai chili!

This sauce is very versatile, so have fun with it!

We caught limits of King Mackerel with Captain Andy Piland and daughter April Piland on the Good Times out of Hatteras Harbor in November 2019, and you can bet that this recipe will come into play as we consume those beautiful fillets all winter and into the 2020 spring!

Contributed by: CHAC angler, John Germanos – aka The Instinctive Chef



Mackerel Cakes ready to Swim in Crisco Bay!



Prepare the Aioli and plate with fried cakes!

