

Chef's Corner: Pineapple-Habanero BBQ Cobia Ribs

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This Louisiana Staple can Curl Your Hair or Tickle your Tongue – Hot or Mild, it's sure to Bring the Gulf Coast to Your Table with Every Succulent Bite!

Waste not, want not continues to be my theme as I explore the ethical utilization of all edible morsels from our catch and/or harvest.

Cobia Ribs are no exception, and this recipe will put even the finest BBQ Pork Rib recipes on notice!

Cobia yields sweet flavored, versatile steaks, fillets, and ribs that have captured the distinctive palate of fish lovers and health advocates alike.

It is a saltwater fish that is available across Southeastern Virginia and the Carolinas for most of the spring, summer, and fall. It is rich in the same heart-friendly oil content (Omega 3) found in Salmon and other healthy fishes.

The raw meat is light tan but turns white when fully cooked. The texture is moist, firm, and easily flakes – but holds up very well on the grill or in the skillet.

The skin can be tough and is draped with small scales.

When grilling skin-side down, I leave the scales on to achieve a planking effect. The skin can also be scaled and crisped (not burnt) to yield a very tasty, nutritious outer crust.

Cobia is cooked in a wide variety of dishes that accentuate its natural flavor and nutritional benefits. Its firm texture is suitable for skewering, grilling, or preparing as a juicy steak with classic seasonings or marinades applied to meat.

When filleted and fried crispy, Cobia is a crunchy treat that kids can't resist, rivalling even the best chicken fingers!

It can also be smoked, sauced, or seared to really bring out its succulent flavor; and, as sushi and sashimi, the raw, fleshy and flavorful taste of Cobia flesh is truly impressive.

Nutritionally, Cobia is a good source of Omega 3, protein, and is high in riboflavin and Vitamin B6 nutrients. It is also rich in magnesium, potassium, selenium, niacin, and sodium.

For the calorie counters out there, at between 150-170 Calories per 4-ounce serving, it packs a powerful nutritional punch with a caloric content that can easily be "worked" off by reading a good book on the beach! What a bargain!

Now, on with this month's featured recipe!



Pineapple-Habanero BBQ-Glazed Cobia Ribs with Rice and Peas!

Pineapple-Habanero BBQ Cobia Ribs

While several different BBQ sauces will work well for this recipe, I happened to have a jar of Pineapple-Habanero sauce that I was itching to try, and it was excellent! Feel free to substitute your favorite sauce!

Ingredients:

2 racks of fresh bone-in Cobia ribs

Several tablespoons of bacon grease for basting (can use other oils or fat)

Cajun seasoning blend (or other favorite)

Pineapple-habanero BBQ Sauce for the glaze (or other favorite)

Lemon & parsley for garnish

Directions:

Cobia ribs may be prepared over hot coals or broiled in a conventional oven. For this application, I used a conventional oven, and the end result was every bit as tasty as the grilled variation which I have used in the past.

Prepare the Cobia ribs for the broiler or grill by rinsing and patting dry each rack of ribs; then, place on a suitable broiling pan or oven-safe tray.

The pan may be covered with foil for ease of clean-up, but that's up to you!



VBAC's Kelly Hoggard's 60-inch Cobia that furnished the Ribs for this Recipe!



Bone-in Cobia Ribs rinsed and patted dry for basting and seasoning!



Infusing the basted Cobia Ribs with Dry Rub Spices!

Baste each rack of ribs with bacon grease (or other oil/fat) and broil each side on high heat until golden brown, re-basting once on each side to moisten and caramelize the seasoning.

At this point, I transferred the browned racks of ribs to a foil-covered pan prior to basting with the Pineapple-Habanero BBQ glaze. This is optional, but it does make for an easy clean-up when the melted sauce oozes into the pan!



Broiling both sides on High Heat to Lock in the Juices!



Ready to Paint the Pineapple-Habanero BBQ Glaze!

After re-basting, apply the Pineapple-Habanero sauce to the first browned side and flip over. I call this “*painting*” and try to get a nice coating to ensure the flavor is spread evenly.

Once turned, paint the second side and “*Broast*” the rack of ribs in the oven until the sauce melts, bubbles, and glazes over the full rack. It’s okay to tend the sauce to make sure it coats and glazes evenly!

Broasting is a technique I like to use whereby the broiler is left on “*High*,” but the tray is returned to a lower rack with oven closed. This is similar to baking on high heat, but it eliminates a step and retains the heat already built-up in the oven.

I also find that it really works nicely for finishing off a dish without the risk of burning the outer layer that broiling on the top rack sometimes introduces.



Bottom Side Painted and ready to transfer and flip!



Painting the Top Side with the BBQ Glaze



Painted and Ready to Flip!



Ready to Re-Paint with Drippings after 15 minutes!



Quarter Rack removed and ready to serve!



Quarter Rack of BBQ Cobia Ribs over rice!

Once the glaze has “set” on the ribs, serve with any sides typically enjoyed with BBQ Pork or Beef Ribs!

For this meal, I served over Jasmine rice with a side of green peas, and it was excellent. The rice really complemented the rich flavor of the Pineapple-Habanero BBQ Sauce.

I hope this dish inspires anglers to rethink how they look at the edibility of rib and belly meat – especially on some of the larger fish species.

Far too often I see fish mongers and amateur anglers waste so much quality meat when they process Cobia and other game fishes.

These cuts contain the highest fat content, and that means succulent flavor and a buttery texture loaded with heart-healthy Omega 3 oils and vital nutrients.

In fact, even the leftovers from this recipe retain a wonderful texture and flavor. The leftover meat can also be removed from the ribs and chopped and converted into an excellent Cobia BBQ for sandwiches (details in future article!)

Additional Ways to Enjoy Cobia

Cobia is one of my favorite fish to cook because it is so versatile, and it freezes very well. The key is proper handling and packaging to retain moisture, texture, and flavor without degradation or loss of palatability.

Look for more Cobia recipes in future editions of The Chef's Corner, to include the following tried and tested successes:

- Mediterranean Broiled Cobia Steaks
- Cobia Ceviche
- Char-Grilled Cobia Steaks
- Blackened Cobia Steaks
- Baked Cobia with Hollandaise Sauce
- Crispy-Fried Cobia Bites – just add kids and dipping sauces!
- Blackened Cobia Bites – fantastic *snacketizer*!
- Beer-battered Cobia Fish-n-Chips
- Pan-seared Honey-Lemon-Cobia
- Sautéed Cobia with Vegetables
- Cajun Cobia Gumbo with Shrimp & Rice
- Cobia Corn Chowder (can also make New England- and Manhattan-style chowders!)
- Chunky Curried Cobia – great way to clear the sinuses!
- Cobia Parmigiana with Marinara Sauce – *Delizioso*!
- Poached Cobia Fillet Oreganata with Clams and Shrimp – low calorie with decadent taste!
- Carolina-style Cobia BBQ with Slaw (or use leftover rib meat!)



Broiled Cobia Steaks!

These are but a few of the recipes I have discovered and tried, and all are exceptional. The list indeed goes on!

The imagination is the limit when it comes to Cobia recipes as it can be served raw; poached; baked; broiled; grilled; skewered; pan-seared; cold in salads; chunked in soups and gumbos; or whipped into spreads and cakes.



Cobia Ceviche!



Char-Grilled Cobia!



Sautéed Cobia and Vegetables!

Bon Appetit!

Contributed by CHAC Angler John Germanos, aka "The Instinctive Chef," and inspired by fellow CHAC Angler Kelly Hoggard.

