

Sesame-Crusted Salmon with Lemon and Ginger

INGREDIENTS

- 6 Tablespoons salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sesame seeds
- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) skinless salmon fillets (wild sockeye, farm raised tastes mushy)
- 2 scallions, white parts minced, green parts sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest plus 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons tahini
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Dissolve 5 tablespoons salt in 2 quarts water. Transfer 1 cup brine to bowl, stir in sesame seeds, and let stand at room temperature for 5 minutes. Submerge fillets in remaining brine and let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes.
2. Drain seeds and place in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook seeds over medium heat, stirring constantly, until golden brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer seeds to pie plate and wipe out skillet with paper towels. Remove fillets from brine and pat dry.
3. Place scallion whites and lemon zest on cutting board and chop until whites and zest are finely minced and well combined. Transfer scallion-zest mixture to bowl and stir in lemon juice, tahini, ginger, cayenne, and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt.
4. Evenly distribute half of paste over bottoms (skinned sides) of fillets. Press coated sides of fillets in seeds and transfer, seed side down, to plate. Evenly distribute remaining paste over tops of fillets and coat with remaining seeds.
5. Heat oil in now-empty skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Place fillets in skillet, skinned side up, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until seeds begin to brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and, using 2 spatulas, carefully flip fillets over. Transfer skillet to oven. Bake until center of fish is translucent when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 125 degrees, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer to serving platter and let rest for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with scallion greens and serve.