

Lemon-Brined Halibut

Makes 4 main course servings

½ preserved lemon

Four 5-ounce pieces halibut fillet, skinless

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 medium red onion, finely diced

1 red pepper, roasted, peeled and chopped

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 teaspoon sugar

1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped

¼ teaspoon hot red pepper flakes, or Aleppo pepper

1 small pinch saffron, crumbled

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint

Freshly ground black pepper

½ cup fresh bread crumbs

Cut the preserved lemon half into quarters. Cut the pith and pulp from the skin. Chop the pith and pulp and transfer to a non-reactive bowl. Add the halibut and toss gently to coat the fish. Cover and refrigerate for one hour.

Meanwhile, chop the preserved lemon skin into ¼ inch dice. Transfer to a bowl.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the red onion and cook for 5 minutes. Add the red peppers and cook an additional 3 minutes. Then add the sugar, garlic, capers, hot red pepper flakes and saffron and cook an additional 3 minutes. Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water with the preserved lemon skin, parsley and mint. Pour the mixture into a baking dish just large enough to hold the halibut comfortably.

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

After an hour, remove the halibut from the bowl and gently scrape off any clinging preserved lemon pulp. Put the halibut in the baking dish. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Top with bread crumbs, and drizzle with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the fish is cooked and the bread crumbs are crisp and golden.