Seared Sea Bass with Saffron Risotto and Citrus Beurre Blanc

Holiday · Serves 4

Ken's note: TBD

Crisp-skinned sea bass on a loose saffron risotto with a bright citrus butter sauce. Two other pages carry the building blocks: Risotto (the basic method and the saffron variation) and Beurre Blanc (in Sauces). Do the sauce and risotto first, and sear the fish last.

Ingredients

Sea bass

- 4 sea bass fillets (5–6 oz each), skin on, pin bones removed
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 Tbsp neutral oil
- 2 Tbsp butter

To serve

- Saffron Risotto (see Risotto)
- Citrus Beurre Blanc (see Sauces)
- Chopped chives, flaky salt, and microgreens or arugula (optional)

Method

1. Make the saffron risotto and the citrus beurre blanc, keeping each warm over very low heat.
2. Pat the fillets completely dry, especially the skin; score thick skin lightly. Season both sides with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large nonstick or well-seasoned pan over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Lay the fish in skin-side down and press each fillet flat for 10–15 seconds. Cook without moving 4–5 minutes, until the skin is deeply golden and the fish is mostly opaque up the sides.
3. Add the butter. When it foams, tilt the pan and spoon it over the fish for 1–2 minutes, until just cooked through. Rest 1–2 minutes.
4. Spoon the risotto onto warm plates, ring it with the beurre blanc, and set the fish on top, skin-side up. Finish with chives and a few grains of flaky salt.