



Local is lekker!

Our heritage food contributor, Karen Dudley of Woodstock's The Kitchen, savours the privilege of eating fish fresh from our own waters.

The blare of the fish horn announces the fishermen with their Cortina bakkie draped in damp burlap containing their line-caught snoek straight from the boats. These fishermen, usually with a reed-thin boy in tow, are still a feature of many Cape Town neighbourhoods.

Once you hear the horn, you know you'll succumb to this convenient supper brought right to your doorstep fresh from the sea! This has been the way for decades. Housewives appear, ready to examine the silvery cool bodies. Are they fresh? Did they really come in just a few hours ago? How much for one?

They quietly consider: "What to do with it? Curry? Smoorsnoek with mash? Fried with chips? With a still bright fish eye regarding her, the deal is struck and the fish is *vlekked* right then and there and wrapped in newspaper. Supper is sorted!

I love the fillet-like soft belly of snoek braai'd or grilled with apricot jam or a sweet barbecue glaze. Yes! Pull out those bones and savour the unique flavour of this fish of the people.

Growing up in the '70s, we spent many a camping holiday at Sonesta, a holiday resort near Hawston. We'd pitch our tent with a group of family friends, some of whom had caravans. These were the days of Peugeot 505s, Volvos and Valiants. It was a choice beach holiday!

There were rock pools to explore, games on the beach, singing choruses around the campfire, Monopoly and Scrabble marathons for the adults, and diving.

Uncle Phil would catch crayfish to boil (children watching in fascinated horror) or braai and there was even that revered delicacy – perlemoen! I remember huge pots of periwinkles boiling on the camp stove. We learnt the art of eating them (hooking them out of their shells with a pin) and the sweet pleasure of extracting every last morsel from the crayfish legs.

Watching fishermen bringing in their catch and buying fish right there on the pier is one of

the great privileges of living in Cape Town. But my heart goes out to fishermen whose livelihood is constantly under commercial, political and environmental threat; it makes me aware of the provenance of the catch and the privilege of eating fish from our own waters.

I think the best smoked snoek comes from Hout Bay. Oak smoked and uncoloured, its flavour is exceptionally delicious – which means I have to make regular visits. And then, of course, I also have to have some of the best fish and chips in Cape Town as well as feast on the sea air and splendour of Chapman's Peak.

When I worked in London, I learned to make kedgeree – a British-Indian dish traditionally made with smoked haddock. My eyes boggled at the liberal amount of cream in it (don't think about it too hard – the results are worth it!) but back home, I tried it with smoked snoek which I think adds a particularly wonderful dimension to the dish. Delicious!



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Smoked snoek kedgeree

Serves 8

- 625ml jasmine or basmati rice
- 10ml ground turmeric or your favourite Malay rice seasoning
- 10ml salt
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 6 cardamom pods, bruised
- 6 onions, thinly sliced
- 30ml oil for frying
- 125ml chutney (or to taste)
- 400g smoked snoek, deboned and flaked
- 500ml fresh cream
- white pepper

GARNISH

- 30ml chopped coriander or Italian parsley
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, quartered

1 Boil the rice with the turmeric, salt, cinnamon sticks and cardamom pods until just done – about 7-8 minutes. The rice will cook some more and absorb other liquids, so you don't want to overdo it at this stage. Drain in a colander.

2 Meanwhile, fry the onions in oil until translucent and then caramelize over medium heat for 10-12 minutes.

3 Stir the onions, smoked snoek, chutney and cream through the rice (aaahhh!). Place in an ovenproof dish and heat, covered, for 20-30 minutes at 180°C. Serve garnished with plenty of parsley or coriander and the boiled eggs.

The secret to this dish is the voluptuous addition of cream. - Karen

Worried about the sustainability of the fish you eat?

Go to oceanwise.co.za to check its status or consult the SASSI list of endangered species at wwfsassi.co.za. If you love fish, take a look at *Star Fish* by Daisy Jones for some delicious recipe ideas. 🏠

