

# CEDAR-SMOKED PLANKED SALMON

*It's Summertime!*

As summertime arrives, cedar-smoked plank salmon becomes a highlight of outdoor cooking and gatherings. This dish brings together fresh flavors and a smoky aroma that highlight the essence of summer. Its fresh taste and inviting smoky aroma make it a wonderful option for dinners, celebrations, and summer evening porch parties. Cedar-smoked planked salmon not only satisfies the palate but also creates a memorable experience that perfectly matches the warmth and energy of the Summers in the White Mountains!

## Why Cedar-Planked Salmon Is My Go-to Recipe

The first time I tried making cedar-smoked planked salmon was shortly after I retired and purchased my first Traeger smoker. As a family, we have always enjoyed salmon and the rich, smoky flavor that comes from cooking with wood. The combination of our love for salmon and the appeal of smoked foods made this recipe an instant favorite.

One of the standout features of using a cedar plank is not just the exceptional flavor it imparts to the fish, but also how easy the process is. Cooking salmon this way requires very little effort and results in almost no cleanup, making it a win-win situation.

Along with the wonderful smoky taste, cedar-planked salmon turns out moist, flaky, and perfectly cooked every time. (Really!)

Cedar-smoked planked salmon has become one of my most reliable and effortless recipes. It's simple to prepare, easy to serve, and consistently is a crowd-pleaser! Whether I'm hosting a family dinner, a summer gathering, or drinks on the patio, this dish always earns rave reviews.

To make sure I'm always ready to cook cedar-planked salmon, I stock up on cedar planks in bulk. In the summer, planks can be scarce to find, especially in our little mountain town, or they may take a few days to arrive by mail. By keeping several planks on hand, I avoid delays and can whip up the recipe whenever!

## Versatility Across Different Grills

I've prepared cedar-planked salmon using various types of cookers, including my Traeger smoker, an egg-style ceramic cooker, and a classic charcoal grill. Regardless of the grill I use, the key to success is preheating it to medium heat before placing the well-soaked cedar plank and the salmon on it. This step ensures the salmon cooks evenly and absorbs the rich, smoky flavor from the cedar.

Choosing the Right Salmon for

## Cedar-Planked Cooking

When preparing cedar-planked salmon, it's important to select a fillet that is uniform in thickness and size. This ensures the salmon cooks evenly, resulting in a moist and perfectly done dish. For gatherings and dinner parties, opting for skinless salmon is often the best choice. Serving skinless fillets makes it easier for guests to enjoy their meal without having to navigate around the skin. If you have a lengthy salmon fillet that won't fit on a single plank, simply cut it in half and use two smaller boards. However, for the most appealing presentation, aim to use one large plank that accommodates the entire fillet. This not only looks impressive on the table but also adds to the overall experience of cedar-planked salmon.

If you opt for wild-caught salmon, there is one important detail to keep in mind. Wild fillets often contain pin bones—small, soft bones running down the center. Many of the fillets I have purchased recently in town still had these pin bones intact. They can be removed with tweezers before cooking, which is a simple step that helps avoid any unpleasant surprises at the table. It's another reason I go with the skinless fillets.

## A Unique and Impressive Salmon Dish

Cedar-planked salmon is truly impressive, offering a one-of-a-kind experience that goes beyond ordinary salmon dishes. What makes this dish stand out even more is its flexibility—you can easily tailor it to your taste by adding fresh herbs such as basil, rosemary, and lemon thyme from the garden and a touch of fresh lemon. This allows you to bring a personalized touch and elevates the dining experience with bright flavors and aromatic accents. Using **PINETOP OLIVE OIL MEYER LEMON**, or our new addition **DILL OLIVE OIL**. Both are great options!

## **Rustic Elegance and Perfect Pairings**

The smoky flavor created by the cedar plank transforms simple salmon into a meal that feels both rustic and elegant! For a beautiful presentation, you can serve the salmon directly on the smoked cedar plank, or if you prefer, transfer it to an attractive serving platter to impress your guests.

I always pair this salmon with my classic homemade creamy garlic-dill sauce. The cool, tangy sauce complements the rich, wood-smoked fish wonderfully. For a complete experience, I like to serve slices of fresh **PINETOP OLIVE OIL FOCACCIA** on the side, which is ideal for soaking up any extra sauce and balancing the flavors. Rustic and classy!

## **Preparing the Creamy Garlic-Dill Sauce Ahead of Time**

**TIP:** For the best flavor, I always make my creamy garlic dill sauce the day before serving the salmon. Allowing the sauce to rest overnight gives the ingredients time to meld, resulting in a more harmonious and robust taste. Preparing the sauce ahead ensures that every spoonful enhances the cedar-smoked salmon with a cool, tangy accent that perfectly complements the meal.

## **Making Pinetop Olive Oil Classic Focaccia**

**TIP:** Don't forget to prepare your **PINETOP OLIVE OIL CLASSIC FOCACCIA** before you cook your salmon, or while it's grilling. The dough needs about an hour to rise, and the bread bakes for approximately 40 to 45 minutes. In my experience, I made the focaccia on the grill in an iron skillet right before cooking the salmon, as shown in the pictures. However, there's no strict rule to follow — make it a day ahead if that suits your schedule. The important part is to just make it!

## **Plank Preparation & Safety Tips**

### **Soaking the Cedar Plank**

To ensure your cedar plank is properly prepared for grilling, soak it in water for at least 4 to 5 hours before cooking. For the best results, an overnight soak is recommended. You can use a sink filled with water and place a heavy object on top, such as a water jug or a Tupperware container filled with water, to keep the plank fully submerged. Don't have a big enough sink? An ice chest will do!

If you are short on time, soaking the plank in hot water can help speed up the process, but be sure to let the plank cool down completely before placing it on the grill or adding your salmon.

### **Grilling Safety**

While grilling, it's a good idea to keep a water bottle handy. If the cedar plank catches fire along an edge or two, simply spritz it with water to control the flames. This easy step helps maintain safety and ensures the plank continues to impart its smoky flavor without burning. So far this has never been an issue when I make it because my planks are always very hydrated.

## **So, let's get Fishing!**

### **One day before grilling,**

Creamy Garlic Dill Sauce: In a medium-sized mixing bowl, blend. Taste and alter based on your preference. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup avocado mayonnaise (not Miracle Whip)
- ¼ cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Zest of one small lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bunches of fresh dill, chopped fine

Soak the cedar plank

Soak the cedar plank: Place the plank in a large container/sink filled with water. Use a weight, such as a heavy pot or several cans, to keep the plank fully submerged. Soak for a minimum of four to five hours, or preferably overnight. Important to prevent the plank from catching fire on the grill.

Ingredients

- 1 cedar plank, untreated (soaked)
- 1/2 cup **PINETOP OLIVE OIL MEYER LEMON or DILL OLIVE OIL**
- Fresh dill (2 bunches chopped for Creamy Garlic Dill sauce) (1 bunch to place on top of salmon before grilling)
- 2.5 -3 lbs. salmon fillet (boneless/skinless)
- Sea salt/Freshly cracked pepper
- 1 cup avocado mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped
- 2 fresh lemons (1 to use for juice and zest) (1 sliced to put on salmon before it's cooked, and the rest to smoke on the grill)

### Instructions

1. Preheat the grill: Preheat your grill to medium heat (around 350 to 375°) Make sure the grates are clean.
2. Oil the plank: Remove the soaked cedar plank from the water and pat it dry with a paper towel. Brush the top surface of the plank with 1 tablespoon of **PINETOP OLIVE OIL**. It helps prevent the salmon from sticking.
3. Drizzle both sides of the salmon with **PINETOP OLIVE OIL MEYER LEMON or DILL**, and season with sea salt and pepper to your taste.
4. Place salmon on the plank: Arrange the salmon fillet (skin side down if it has skin) on the oiled cedar plank. If the salmon is cut, make sure the fillets are evenly spaced and not overlapping.
5. Herbs and Lemons: Place sliced lemon and fresh dill sprigs on top of the salmon fillet. Drizzle a bit more **PINEOP OLIVE OIL** on top before grilling.
6. Grill the salmon: Carefully place the cedar plank with the salmon onto the preheated grill. Close the grill lid. Grill for 10 minutes. Make sure that everything is going well and there is no wood flaring up.
7. Continue grilling: Close the grill lid again and continue to grill until the salmon flakes easily with a fork. Doneness test: If you have a meat thermometer, the internal temperature of the salmon should reach 145°F (63°C). (Don't overcook)
8. Remove from the grill and allow to set for about three to four minutes. Serve on the wooden plank or remove and place on your favorite fancy serving dish.

### VINO?

Of Course! May I suggest a nice Rose wine or an Italian white? At **PINETOP OLIVE OIL**, we have more than just olive oil and balsamic. We have a unique selection of sought-after wines! Come in and see us!

Cheers!

Kimberly Young