



Hispanic American Heritage



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Daisy Martinez's Recipe For Grilled Red Snapper

(Chillo al la Parilla)

I use a gas grill at home, one that gets very hot. I don't want to char the skin of the fish, because we love to eat it. So, I set the dial to about medium high and let it heat up for 10 minutes or so before cooking.

I cook the fish separately in very handy nonstick fish-shaped grill baskets, made specifically for this purpose. If you don't have fish baskets, oil the fish and then the grill with a thick wad of paper towels dipped in oil before grilling. Use two long kitchen forks to turn and remove the fish.

Ingredients

Serves 4

Two 1 1/2-pound cleaned red snappers, left whole

Dry adobo, homemade or store-bought

2 lemons, cut in half

Juice of 1 sour orange (naranja agria) or juice orange, optional
Ajilimojili (Caribbean hot sauce)

1. Sprinkle the fish inside and out very liberally with the adobo. Line them up side by side in a baking dish large enough to hold them comfortably. Squeeze the lemons and sour orange, if using, over the inside and outside. Cover and refrigerate the fish for up to an hour (if longer, the lemon juice may start to cure the fish).

2. Heat a gas grill to medium high or build a banked coal fire. Grill the fish, turning once, until the meat along the backbone close to the head is opaque and firm, 15 to 20 minutes. If you're working over coals, start the snapper on the hotter side of the grill then gently move it, after about 5 minutes, to the middle zone. The skin should be golden and crispy in spots. Serve whole.

3. To serve the fish, start by making a cut along the backbone. Insert the knife and, working gently, separate the fillet from the bones starting at the head and working toward the tail. Take it slowly and you will see that the fillets separate easily from the bone. Don't worry about making perfect fillets the first time out; you'll get better with each practice. Each person can finish removing bones from the fish as they work their way through the fillet. That's part of the fun of eating a whole fish.

