

PACIFIC HALIBUT

HARVEST METHOD: Halibut is harvested with longline gear. In longline fishing, a vessel lays out a long fishing line which is anchored to the bottom of the ocean at each end. The ends are marked with buoys and floats. Several baited hooks are attached to this line at regular intervals.

PROCESSING METHOD: Once the fish are caught with longline gear, they are then stunned and bled on the vessel. The cavities are iced, the fish are layered and delivered to the processing plant. At the processing plant, the head is removed and the fish is either left whole or processed into steaks, fillets and roasts. The cheeks are also removed and sold separately.

MARKETS: Approximately 95% of Pacific halibut from British Columbia is exported with 90% being sold to the United States and the balance of that being sold to European markets.

SUSTAINABILITY: The Pacific halibut catch is controlled by an international agreement regulated by the International Halibut Commission of the United States and Canada. The commercial fishery is tightly controlled as evidenced by the fact that: individual vessel quota management was introduced in 1991; all halibut removals by the commercial fleet are accounted for and included in stock assessments; logbooks are required; commercial halibut landings are only permitted at designated ports; fishermen fund an independent, dockside monitoring program where every landed halibut is validated, weighed and tagged with a unique serial number by a third party contractor; an at-sea monitoring program has been implemented, and; the fleet is working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to address incidental catch of rockfish in the halibut fishery and ensure that seabirds are avoided.

HISTORICAL AND ANECDOTAL INFORMATION: Pacific halibut has been harvested in North America since the 1880s. As the largest of the flatfish, the large size of the Pacific halibut is its most distinguishing characteristic. Accordingly, the Latin name for Pacific halibut translates as “Hippo of the Sea”. The English name is derived from “Holy flatfish” - “hali” for holy and “but” for flat – as it was a special fish served on holy days or “holidays” in Medieval England.

Recipe

JAMES WALT
OF THE BLUE WATER CAFÉ (VANCOUVER, BC)
Presents: ROASTED HALIBUT With Beet Salsa
(Serves 4)

3 Tbsp	olive oil	45 mL
4-4 oz	fresh halibut portions, (boneless fillet or steaks)	4-100 g
	sea salt, to taste	
	juice of 1/2 lemon	

1. In a skillet, heat the olive oil to medium heat.
2. Lightly season the halibut with sea salt and place in the skillet.
3. Cook the halibut for 8 to 10 minutes per inch or until golden brown on each side. Halibut is done when the flesh loses its glossy appearance and flakes easily when pressed with a fork.
4. Remove from the skillet when just cooked and place on a paper towel.
5. Brush halibut with lemon juice.
6. Divide the fish onto 4 plates and garnish with the salsa, roasted potatoes and your favourite vegetable.

BEET SALSA

1 1/2 cups	diced cooked red beets	375 mL
2 Tbsp	finely diced shallots	30 mL
1 tsp	grated fresh ginger	5 mL
1/4 cup	finely chopped Italian parsley zest and juice of 1 orange	50 mL
3 Tbsp	maple or sherry vinegar	45 mL
1/4 cup	extra virgin olive oil	50 mL
	salt & freshly ground pepper, to taste	

1. In a bowl combine all ingredients.
2. Refrigerate until needed.