

**Citrus Seared Red Snapper,
Dragonfruit Salsa and Saffron Cream
paired with
Deconstructed Tuna Nicoise
(Main Course Duo)**



**2016 CATIE Submission for
BEST MAIN COURSE PLATE PRESENTATION**



Synopsis

What do you do when your client loves seafood so much, they can't choose between the tuna dish and the red snapper dish at the tasting? Easy! You create a dish that incorporates both. This beautiful fish duo main course consisted of a pan seared red snapper with notes of citrus, topped with a tart dragonfruit salsa, saffron cream sauce and micro greens, accompanied by diced fresh ahi tuna with all the traditional ingredients of a tuna nicoise, deconstructed. Finished with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, Himalayan sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper, this dish had something for everyone: sweet, salty and savoury.



Synopsis

Our client wanted the freshest fish available for their corporate event, and we sourced some local red snapper to satisfy our client's discerning palette. Since this premium cut of tuna was best appreciated served raw, quality was paramount when selecting the tuna for this dish. Thanks to a good relationship that we've fostered with our seafood supplier, we were lucky enough to get fish from our fishmonger delivered directly to the venue on the day of the event. Talk about fresh!





Concept and Design

This dish was all about clean flavours and sharp optics. The plate selection was important. We wanted a long plate that had enough room for each portion to stand out and be distinct. We chose a modern, “long boat” style plate in pure white to really let the dish pop.

At first, we had planned on serving the tuna nicoise as a composed salad. To create a bit of whimsical, we decided to deconstruct the dish to appear more spontaneous and casual. This also allowed our guests to see each ingredient on its own and have a bite of each component independently.

Culinary Components and Assembly

This dish consisted of both hot and cold ingredients. The tuna component was plated in advance. The chef artfully arranged the slivered olives, fingerling potatoes, heirloom tomatoes, haricots verts, and red onions on the plate. There is an art to creating a dish that seems to be just “thrown on the plate” while maintaining consistency and precision in plating. We didn’t want the plate to appear too “done up”, since this was a deconstructed dish. We carefully placed the olive, potato and tomato mixture on the plate, and just before service, we carefully arranged the marinated tuna cubes on the dish, drizzled with extra virgin olive oil, and seasoned the dish with Himalayan sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper.



Culinary Components and Assembly

Then came the hot component of the dish. The red snapper was quickly seared in a hot, cast iron pan together with fresh lemon zest. The fish was placed skin side up on the plate, which already had the tuna component plated. Working quickly so the snapper stayed hot, we topped each filet with a small scoop of dragonfruit salsa.

To finish the dish, a light touch of saffron cream sauce on the plate was added for flavour, smoothness and colour. Microgreens accented the dish for the final touch.

The pairing of the hot red snapper with the cold tuna nicoise dish really created an interesting contrast of texture, flavour, temperature and colour.



Challenges and Obstacles

Maintaining the correct temperature of a dish is a challenge on a single component main course plate. Creating a dish with both hot and cold components truly is double the trouble. The timing of the dish was very difficult. We had the fresh tuna that we had to be careful not to over-marinate, and hot snapper that had to be removed from the heat, topped with salsa, drizzled with cream sauce and garnished with micro greens, all in under 12 minutes. To ensure the dish was served at the right temperature, we limited the guest list to 40 attendees. Any more than that and we would not have been able to cope with the volume. For the 40 plates, we had a team of 12 chefs on site to expedite the plating.





Recipes

Citrus Seared Red Snapper

Ingredients

2 x 2 oz fillet red snapper, skin on (ensure this is very fresh)
1 tsp canola oil
1 lemon, zested and juiced
Salt and pepper

Method

Heat a cast iron pan on high flame until very hot. Coat pan with canola oil. Pan sear snapper skin side down until just cooked through, about 2 – 3 minutes. Turn fish skin side up and season with salt, pepper, lemon zest. Deglaze pan with 1 tsp lemon juice. Remove from heat and serve immediately.

Dragonfruit Salsa

Ingredients

1 large dragonfruit, peeled and finely diced
1 large Afulo mango, peeled and finely diced
Juice of 1 lime
1/8 red onion, finely diced
Salt and pepper
Extra virgin olive oil

Method

Combine diced dragonfruit, mango, red onion and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Top snapper with 1 TBSP salsa

Saffron Cream Sauce

Ingredients

1/3 cup 35% cream
Pinch saffron
Salt and pepper
1 tsp butter or margarine

Method

Toast saffron in oven for 30 seconds. Remove from oven and crush saffron with side of a chef's knife until you create a powder. Pour 2 tsp boiling water over saffron to create a saffron tea. Bring heavy cream to a boil until reduced by half. Season cream with salt and pepper. Add saffron tea and whisk to combine. Remove from heat and add 1 tsp butter and whisk well until combined. Serve immediately.



Recipes

Tuna Nicoise

Ingredients

3 fingerling potatoes, cut into 1" chunks
6 haricots verts, sliced in half and steamed for 2 minutes
1/16 red onion, slivered
1 small tomato, seeded and sliced into slivers
4 Kalamata olives, pitted and sliced into slivers
½ lemon, juiced
Salt and pepper
Extra virgin olive oil

2 oz ahi tuna
Salt and pepper
½ lemon, juiced
Extra virgin olive oil

Method

Steam fingerling potatoes for 3 – 5 minutes. Steam haricots verts for 1 – 2 minutes. Combine potatoes, green beans, olives, tomatoes and red onions. Toss with lemon juice, salt, pepper, extra virgin olive oil. Place mixture on plate.

Dice tuna into ¼" cubes. Season tuna with extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and freshly squeezed lemon juice. Marinate for no longer than 3 – 4 minutes. Scatter tuna cubes among nicoise salad. Garnish with micro greens and drizzle extra virgin olive oil. Serve immediately.

