INDIRECT · MEDIUM

Christmas Eve Baked Besugo (Red Seabream) with Panadera Potatoes in the Kamado

Two portion-sized besugo (red seabream) bake on panadera potatoes in a cast-iron skillet, kamado at 200 °C indirect, and a garlic and lemon refrito goes over at the end. It is the Christmas Eve dish, and it leaves the oven free.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
25 min	60 min	2	200 °C

Ingredients

- **2 ud** portion-sized besugo (red seabream) of 350-400 g whole weight, scaled and gutted at the fishmonger's, head on (or portion-sized dorada, gilthead bream)
- **1 kg** firm-fleshed potatoes
- **2 ud** medium onions, finely sliced
- **1 ud** Italian green pepper (long, mild frying pepper), in strips
- **100 ml** extra virgin olive oil, for the potatoes and the fish
- **100 ml** dry white wine
- **2 ud** lemons (one in half-slices for the slashes, one juiced for the refrito)
- **5 ud** garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- **60 ml** extra virgin olive oil, for the refrito
- **1 puñado** fresh parsley, chopped
- **15 g** fine salt, for the potatoes and the fish

Method

1. LIGHT AND SET UP INDIRECT

   Fill the firebox of the Kamado Bono Grande XXL with NaturBraza marabou charcoal (marabú, a very dense wood) up to the top of the fire ring and light it in a single spot. Once the coals are going, put in the deflector, the grate on top and the empty Petromax FP35 skillet in the centre. Close up and settle at 200 °C with the vents. Allow another 15-20 minutes with the chamber already stable so the iron heats right through.

2. SLICE THE POTATOES

   Peel the potatoes and slice them 3-4 mm thick, all the same so they cook together; a mandoline helps. Slice the onion finely and the pepper into strips. Dry the slices with a cloth, then mix everything in a bowl with 10 g of salt and 80 ml of the oil. A 1 cm slice would still be raw when the fish is already done.

3. BAKE THE POTATO BED

   Open the kamado with burping: lift the lid about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds and open it fully, with gloves on and your face turned away. Tip the potatoes into the hot skillet, spread them in an even layer about 3 cm deep and close up. Bake 35-40 minutes at 200 °C and, at the 20-minute mark, open again with burping and stir once with the La Cuisine spatula to free the ones underneath.

4. PREPARE THE BESUGO

   Meanwhile, dry the fish inside and out with kitchen paper. Make three diagonal slashes in each side, down to the spine, and tuck half a lemon slice into each. Salt inside and out with the remaining 5 g and brush the skin with the 20 ml of oil that is left. The slashes let heat into the thick part and bring it into step with the tail.

5. ADD THE WINE AND LAY THE FISH

   When the potato yields to a knife but is still whole, open again with burping and pour the white wine over the bed, at room temperature and never straight from the fridge onto iron at 200 °C. Lay the two besugo on top, head to tail, using the width of the skillet. If a tail touches the wall, let it curve up a little.

6. BAKE AND PROBE TO 60 °C

   Close up and bake 15-20 minutes at 200 °C. From minute 12, open with burping and push a thermometer into the thickest part of the loin, next to the spine, without touching bone. When it reads 60 °C, close up for one more minute and lift out the skillet: AESAN asks for 60 °C for at least one minute in the centre to inactivate anisakis, and it is the top of the 55-60 °C range for juicy fish. If it is short, close up and check again after 3 minutes.

7 MAKE THE REFRITO

In the last few minutes, heat the 60 ml of refrito oil in a small pan on the kitchen hob and fry the sliced garlic over medium heat, slowly, until it is barely blond. Take off the heat, add the juice of the second lemon and the chopped parsley: it spits, and that is expected. Garlic toasted too far turns the whole refrito bitter, so stop early.

8 LIFT OUT, POUR OVER AND SERVE

Lift out the skillet with long gloves and both hands, with the landing spot decided before you open up: empty it weighs 4.4 kg and it is at 200 °C. Set it on wood or a trivet, never on wet stone. Pour the refrito over the besugo and take it to the table. With the La Cuisine spatula, lift the loins off the spine and serve them with the potatoes from underneath.

Editor's tips

- Ask the fishmonger to scale and gut the besugo but leave the head on: it releases gelatine into the juices that run down onto the potatoes and keeps the black blotch that identifies the species.
- If the bed dries out before the fish goes on, add a splash of hot water or lukewarm fish stock. Nothing cold on iron at 200 °C: that is the thermal shock the cast-iron guide warns against.
- Inside the kamado the skillet handles are at chamber temperature. Welding gloves or aramid gloves from the moment you open the lid until the skillet is on the table.
- For four guests with a whole besugo each, a second 35 cm skillet will not fit, not even on a 49-50 cm grate. Bake two rounds back to back: the second bed of potatoes goes in while the first is being served.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Bono Grande XXL 59 cm

This recipe depends on one measurement: the skillet has to fit with a gap for the air. The grate of the Kamado Bono Grande XXL is around 49-50 cm (the 59 in the name is the diameter of the ceramic) and the Petromax FP35 measures 41 cm with its two handles, so 8-9 cm is left free. That is what the cast-iron guide asks for so that heat rises up the sides and the dome works as an oven over the fish. The kit includes the deflector, which turns the embers into the 200 °C indirect set-up that the potatoes and the besugo need. On a 46 cm grate the same skillet goes in with 5 cm, the minimum, and on a grate of 45 cm or less, as in a kamado with a 51-52 cm body, it falls short.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-bono-grande-xxl-59

NaturBraza marabu charcoal, pack of two 5 kg bags (10 kg)

Almost an hour at 200 °C with at least four lid openings along the way (potatoes in, stirring them, wine and fish, thermometer) and no chance of topping up with a 4.4 kg skillet inside. A dense charcoal such as NaturBraza marabou suits that use: marabou is a very compact wood and its charcoal burns slowly with a short flame, so the bed carries the whole cook. The maker's page promises long-lasting embers and little ash, and does not publish the origin or the lump size. For this duration it is enough to fill the firebox to the top of the fire ring.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/naturbraza-carbon-marabu-2x5kg

Petromax FP35 Cast Iron Fire Skillet 35 cm with Handles

It is the vessel for the whole recipe: the potatoes are cooked in it, the fish is finished on top, and the dish goes to the table in it. The Petromax FP35 is bare cast iron, with a 35 cm rim, a 30 cm base and a weight of 4.4 kg, and that thermal mass browns the potato from below and at the sides while the kamado dome works from above. Its two short handles, instead of one long handle, let the lid close with it inside. Its width also sets the fish: two portion-sized besugo of 350-400 g, not one of a kilo, which runs past 40 cm.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/petromax-skillet-fp35

La Cuisine Spatola a fessura: slotted stainless fish slice, 28 cm

A roast besugo is not carved: it is taken apart. The La Cuisine slotted fish spatula has a thin stainless steel blade 16 cm long with a bevelled edge, which slips between the loin and the spine without tearing the flesh and lifts each half to the plate with the potatoes from underneath. The slots let the oil from the refrito drain away instead of dragging it along. It is short, 28 cm overall, so for stirring the potatoes inside the kamado halfway through you need a glove on; the boning is done at the table, with the skillet out.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/la-cuisine-espatula-pescado-ranurada

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Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/besugo-al-horno-patatas-nochebuena-kamado

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