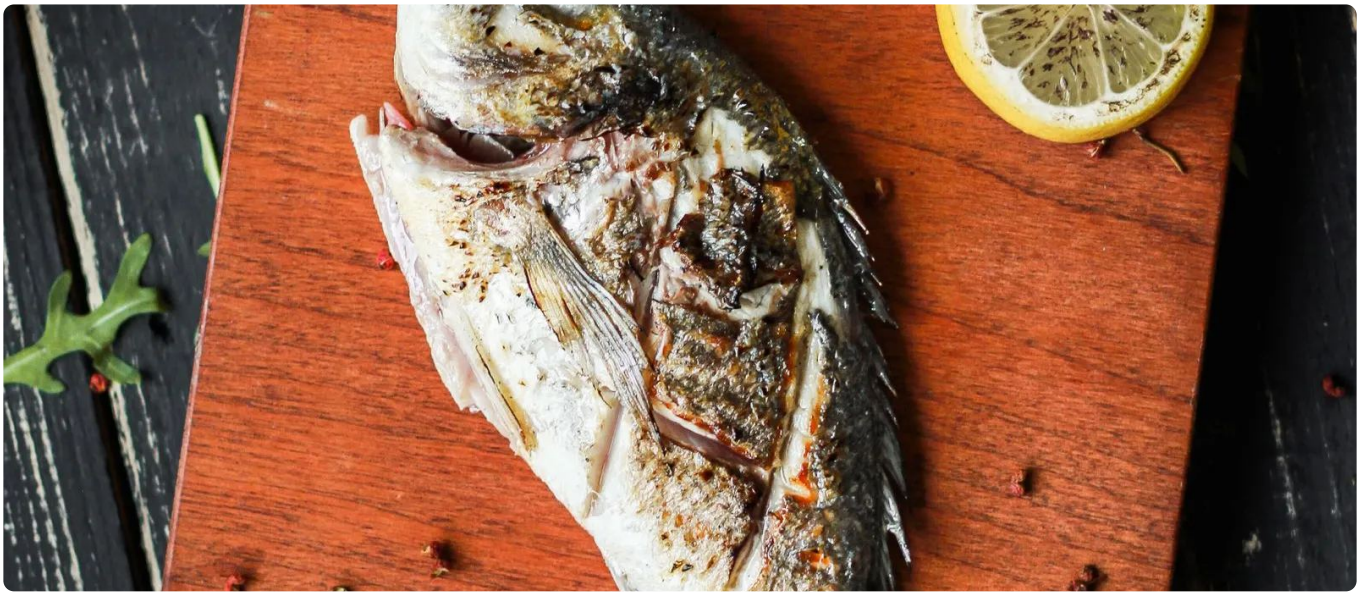
DIRECT · MEDIUM

Butterflied sea bream on the kamado, with garlic, chilli and lemon refrito

Sea bream butterflied open over direct coals, skin down first, finished with a hot garlic, chilli and lemon refrito. Mediterranean fish off Torrevieja, ready in 18 minutes. Serves 2.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
15 min	18 min	2	220 °C

Ingredients

- **2 ud** portion sea bream (350-450 g each), butterflied by your fishmonger
- **4 ud** garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- **1 ud** lemon (half juiced for the refrito, half in wedges to serve)
- **1 puñado** chopped fresh parsley
- **2 ud** olive-wood chunks (soft Mediterranean smoke, optional)
- **6 cda** extra-virgin olive oil (3 for the fish, the rest for the refrito)
- **1 ud** dried chilli (cayenne), whole or in rings
- **1 cda** sherry vinegar (alternative or complement to the lemon)
- **1 cdita** flaky salt (plus fine salt to season the inside)
- **1 pizca** freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 LIGHT DIRECT AND HEAT THE GRIDDLE TO 220°C

Light the charcoal for direct cooking (no deflector) and, if you want smoke, drop the two olive-wood chunks on the coals. Set the half-moon griddle or grilling basket on the grate and let it heat with the kamado to 220°C. The metal must be properly hot before the fish goes on: a lukewarm griddle is what makes the skin stick.

2 PREP AND SEASON THE BUTTERFLIED BREAM

Pat the butterflied bream very dry with paper, especially the skin: moisture is the enemy of crispness. Season the flesh side with fine salt and a little pepper, and brush the whole surface, skin included, with a couple of tablespoons of olive oil. A dry, lightly oiled skin is the one that turns to crisp paper on the hot griddle.

3 COOK SKIN DOWN UNTOUCHED, 12-14 MIN

Lay the bream skin down on the hot griddle and close the lid. Don't move them: the dome heat cooks the flesh bottom-up while the skin sears and golds. After 12-14 minutes the flesh will be almost done, opaque, and the skin crisp. You'll know it's ready because, when you try to lift it, the bream releases cleanly from the metal; if it resists, give it another minute.

4 SHORT FLIP ONTO THE FLESH, 2-3 MIN

With a wide spatula (or by turning the whole basket), flip the bream and mark them on the flesh side for just 2-3 minutes, enough to gild the surface and finish the centre. The flesh should stay juicy, at 55-58°C at the thickest part of the loin: it flakes but stays glossy. Don't overcook it or it will dry out.

5 MAKE THE GARLIC-AND-CHILLI REFRITO

While the fish finishes, heat the rest of the olive oil in a small pan over medium heat. Add the garlic slices and the chilli and brown them slowly until the garlic is just blond and fragrant, never letting it scorch (burnt garlic makes the whole refrito bitter). Take it off the heat at that point: the residual warmth finishes browning it.

6 FINISH WITH VINEGAR OR LEMON OFF THE HEAT

With the pan off the heat but still hot, add the sherry vinegar and/or the juice of half a lemon: it will erupt and crackle, which is exactly what you want. That acid hit at the end cuts the richness of the garlic and lifts the whole dish. Keep the refrito hot to pour over the fish the moment you serve it.

7 PLATE UP AND SERVE SIZZLING

Transfer the bream to plates carefully, skin up to show off the crisp. Pour the hot refrito over the top —it will sizzle on contact with the fish—, scatter chopped parsley and flaky salt, and serve with the lemon wedges. Serve at once: crisp skin is fleeting and softens as soon as the fish cools.

Editor's tips

- Skin down is your insurance against disaster. A butterflied bream on the grate bars almost always sticks and tears on the flip; on a hot griddle or basket, skin down, the skin's own fat releases it by itself. Never force the fish: if it resists when you try to lift it, it isn't sealed yet. Wait, give it another minute and it will come away clean. That patience is the difference between serving a whole bream and serving flakes.
- Measure temperature, not the clock. A portion bream cooks in 18 minutes, but weight and thickness vary, and an overcooked fish is dry and unrecoverable. Sink an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the loin: at 55-58°C it's perfect, juicy and flaking. No probe? Part the flesh beside the spine with a knife tip: it should be opaque and lift easily, yet still glossy. The moment you're unsure, pull it: residual heat finishes the cooking on the plate.
- The refrito's garlic browns, it doesn't burn. The line between blond, fragrant garlic and burnt, bitter garlic is seconds wide, and burnt garlic ruins the whole refrito no matter how good the oil and lemon. Work over medium heat, not high, and pull the pan off when the garlic is just gold: residual heat finishes it without overshooting. And always add

the vinegar or lemon off the heat, because it spits as it erupts and because acid straight over the flame loses its freshness.

Gear for this recipe

Smokey Olive Wood Olive Wood Chunks 1.5 kg

Olive-wood chunks are the smoke of this coast: a soft, respectful Mediterranean background, perfect for a fine fish like bream that strong woods would ruin. A couple of chunks on the coals are enough for an aroma that accompanies without smothering, the most honest nod to the Levante. The 1.5 kg bag lasts for many fires of fish and vegetables.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/smokey-olive-wood-olive-chunks-1-5kg

Kamado Joe Big Block XL lump charcoal 9.1 kg

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/kamado-joe-big-block-xl-lump

Kamado Joe Half Moon Reversible Cast Iron Griddle (Classic)

The half-moon griddle is the accessory that saves a butterflied bream: a continuous iron surface where the skin rests whole, with nothing to slip between or stick to. Heat it with the kamado to 220°C and oil it, and the skin comes off as crisp paper with an even gold the bare grate never delivers. Its half-moon shape leaves the other half free for the refrito or the potatoes.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/kamado-joe-half-moon-griddle-classic

Lavatools Javelin PRO Duo instant-read thermometer

A bream cooks in minutes and one degree too far dries it out: the instant-read thermometer is what separates a juicy bream from a leathery one. Sink it into the thickest part of the loin and pull it at 55-58°C, juicy and flaking. Its near-instant reading lets you measure without opening the lid more than needed or losing heat, exactly what such a fast direct cook demands.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/lavatools-javelin-pro-duo

Weber Precision Grill Spatula (6769)

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-espatula-precision

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/dorada-a-la-espalda-kamado

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