INDIRECT · EASY

Salt-baked sea bass on the kamado, juicy inside

A whole 1.2-1.5 kg sea bass under a coarse-salt crust, indirect heat at 200°C and around 35 minutes. The salt seals the moisture in and the fish comes out juicy, not salty, with a clean taste of the sea.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
20 min	35 min	4	200 °C

Ingredients

- **1 ud** whole fresh sea bass, 1.2-1.5 kg, gutted but NOT scaled
- **2 ud** egg whites (to bind the crust)
- **1 ud** lemon (half sliced for the belly, half to serve)
- **3 ramas** fresh thyme (or dill)
- **4 cda** extra-virgin olive oil (to finish)
- **1.5 kg** coarse sea salt (about 1 kg of salt per kilo of fish)
- **100 ml** cold water (a splash, to dampen the salt)
- **2 ramas** fresh rosemary
- **1 diente** crushed garlic clove (optional, for the belly)
- **1 pizca** freshly ground black pepper (to finish)

Method

1 PREP THE SEA BASS

Ask for the bass gutted but not scaled — the scales are part of the barrier against the salt. Pat it dry on the outside. Stuff the belly with the slices from half a lemon, the rosemary, the thyme and the crushed garlic. Do not season the flesh: the crust does that job from the outside.

2 SET THE DEFLECTOR AND STABILISE 200°C

Light the charcoal, set the deflector for indirect cooking and stabilise the kamado at 200°C. It takes 15-20 minutes. Do not load the fish until the chamber temperature holds steady for 10 minutes. Always indirect: over direct heat the crust scorches underneath before the fish is done.

3 MAKE THE SALT MIX

Mix the coarse salt with the 2 egg whites and a splash of cold water to a packed-snow texture that holds its shape when squeezed. The egg white is the binder: it sets the crust rigid so it does not crumble. Reckon on 1 kg of salt per kilo of fish, plus a little extra to seal properly.

4 BUILD THE BED AND COVER

On a kamado-safe tray or a stone, spread a 1 cm bed of salt in the shape of the fish. Lay the bass on it and cover it completely with the rest of the salt, pressing to seal — leave only the head and tail showing if you like. Close any gaps: that is where the steam escapes.

5 BAKE OVER INDIRECT HEAT

Slide the tray into the kamado and close the lid. Bake at 200°C indirect. For a 1.2-1.5 kg fish reckon 30-35 minutes: the rule of thumb is roughly 22-25 minutes per kilo. Do not open the lid to peek — every opening drops the chamber and stretches the curve. The crust will gradually colour and harden.

6 CHECK DONENESS WITH A PROBE

From the 25-minute mark, push an instant-read probe through the crust into the loin next to the spine (the thickest part). You want 55°C internal. If it is not there yet, close up and check again in 3-4 minutes. The moment it reads 55°C, pull the tray: carry-over does the rest.

7 REST AND CRACK THE CRUST

Let it rest 5 minutes: the temperature climbs to 57-58°C and the juices settle. Tap the crust with the handle of a knife or a pestle until it cracks and lift it off in plates. Peel away the skin with the scales attached — it comes off clean, taking the salt with it. Lift the fillets off the backbone with a flexible spatula.

8 PLATE UP

Set the clean fillets on warm plates. A generous drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil, freshly ground pepper and a lemon wedge alongside. Taste before adding any salt: you almost never need it. Serve with kamado potatoes or a seasonal tomato salad.

Editor's tips

- An instant-read probe is not optional here: it is literally your only eye under the crust. Without it you are blind, and the bass goes from juicy to cottony in five minutes. A Lavatools Javelin or similar reads in 2-3 seconds through the salt.
- Do not scale the fish and do not slash the flesh. The scales and intact skin are the barrier that stops the salt seasoning the inside. If your fishmonger scales it out of habit, ask them specifically NOT to for a salt-baked preparation.
- Skip the heavy smoke. Sea bass is delicate and a chunk of hickory or mesquite buries it completely. If you want a hint, a single small piece of apple or vine cutting is plenty — but the classic version, on good charcoal alone, is already spot on.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Joe Classic II 18"

The 18" Classic takes a whole 1.2-1.5 kg sea bass indirect at 200 °C for 4.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-joe-classic-ii

Kamado Joe Big Block XL lump charcoal 9.1 kg

Lump to lock in a clean 200 °C for the 35 minutes of baking.

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

Lavatools Javelin PRO Duo instant-read thermometer

Probe the centre to confirm the fillet reaches 55 °C under the salt.

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

Navaris Cordierite Pizza Stone Rectangular XL (38×30×1.5 cm)

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/navaris-piedra-pizza-rect-38x30

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/lubina-a-la-sal-kamado

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