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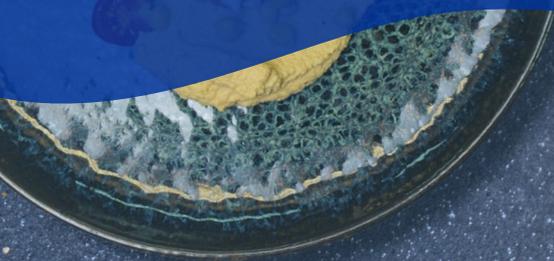
Italy – Croatia

 MARINET



# GOOD AQUAFOOD

cookbook



**Project title:** MARINET - MARiculture NETwork: Implementation of new technologies for diversified sustainable aquaculture targeting healthy society and competitive regions

**Duration:** 01/03/2024 – 31/08/2026

**Coordinator:** University of Udine, Italy

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**Marketing campaign name:** Good AquaFood

**Publisher:** University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management

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**Photos:** KRALJEV GAMBIT j.d.o.o., Canva Pro

**Print:** Novax

Opatija, 2025

The content of the media publication is the sole responsibility of the project partners and can in no way be considered to reflect the views of the European Union.

The project was co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund.

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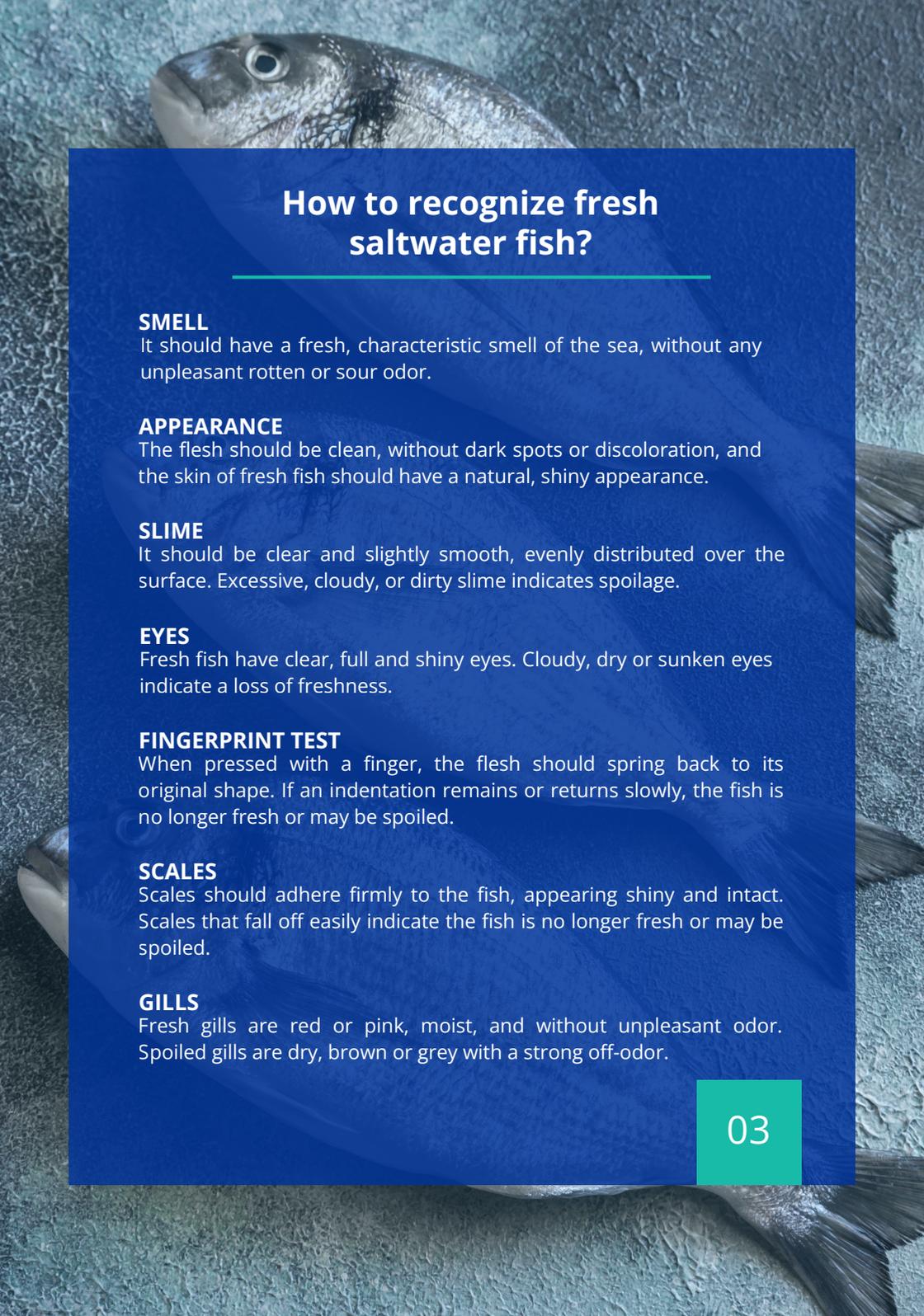


## About the author

**Saša Bešlić** is a teacher-mentor at the Croatian King Zvonimir Secondary School on the island of Krk, a PhD student at the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija, and a lecturer in gastronomy at PAR University College in Rijeka. He has more than 20 years of experience working in hotel and restaurant kitchens in Croatia and abroad. He began his career at Hotel Park Našice and continued as Executive Chef at the Grand Hotel Adriatic in Opatija, where he spent nearly ten years. Abroad, he worked as Corporate Executive Chef for LifeClass Hotels & Spa in Portorož, managing the kitchens of seven hotels.

He completed his education in Našice, Opatija and Dubai, where he trained at prestigious Jumeirah hotels and developed his skills further at the globally recognized Le Cordon Bleu Paris academy.

He collaborates with numerous hotel companies and professional associations and participates in projects of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Science and Education. He is a member of several vocational curriculum reform working groups in Croatia, a member of the Sector Council for Tourism and Hospitality, and a WACS-licensed international culinary judge.



## How to recognize fresh saltwater fish?

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### **SMELL**

It should have a fresh, characteristic smell of the sea, without any unpleasant rotten or sour odor.

### **APPEARANCE**

The flesh should be clean, without dark spots or discoloration, and the skin of fresh fish should have a natural, shiny appearance.

### **SLIME**

It should be clear and slightly smooth, evenly distributed over the surface. Excessive, cloudy, or dirty slime indicates spoilage.

### **EYES**

Fresh fish have clear, full and shiny eyes. Cloudy, dry or sunken eyes indicate a loss of freshness.

### **FINGERPRINT TEST**

When pressed with a finger, the flesh should spring back to its original shape. If an indentation remains or returns slowly, the fish is no longer fresh or may be spoiled.

### **SCALES**

Scales should adhere firmly to the fish, appearing shiny and intact. Scales that fall off easily indicate the fish is no longer fresh or may be spoiled.

### **GILLS**

Fresh gills are red or pink, moist, and without unpleasant odor. Spoiled gills are dry, brown or grey with a strong off-odor.



# Baked sea bass fillet with baby potatoes, sautéed cherry tomatoes and beurre blanc sauce



2 servings



55 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 300 g sea bass fillet
- 240 g baby potatoes
- 100 g cherry tomatoes
- 2 shallots
- 15 ml olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- fresh parsley

### Beurre blanc sauce

- 70 g butter
- 50 ml white wine
- 40 ml white vinegar
- 5 ml lemon juice

## PREPARATION

1. Halve the baby potatoes, season with salt and pepper, brush with olive oil and bake in an oven preheated to 180 °C for about 30 minutes.
2. Season the sea bass fillet with salt and pepper, and grill for about 2 minutes on each side, depending on the thickness of the fillet.
3. For the beurre blanc sauce, combine the finely chopped shallots, white wine, vinegar and lemon juice and simmer over medium heat until the liquid reduces to one third. Whisk in the cold butter cubes to create a smooth sauce.
4. Lightly sauté the cherry tomatoes in olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
5. Arrange the baked baby potatoes on the plate, place the grilled sea bass fillet in the centre, add the sautéed cherry tomatoes and pour the sauce over.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

The creamy beurre blanc, with mild acidity from the wine and lemon and the characteristic aroma of shallots, perfectly complements the sea bass.



# Sea bream tartare with roasted eggplant



3 servings



40 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g sea bream fillet
- 20 ml citrus juice (lemon, orange, lime)
- 100 g eggplant
- 15 ml olive oil
- 5 ml lemon juice
- 1 g garlic
- 5 g fresh parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Remove the skin and bones from the sea bream fillet, cut it into small cubes and season with citrus juice, salt, pepper and olive oil. Chill the tartare in refrigerator.
2. Roast the eggplant at high temperature until the skin darkens. Once cooled, peel it and blend into a spread with olive oil, chopped garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper.
3. For parsley oil, chop fresh parsley, mix briefly with olive oil and strain to obtain a flavored oil.
4. Serve the sea bream tartare with the roasted eggplant spread on top and drizzle with parsley oil. Serve warm toasted bread alongside.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

The combination of roasted eggplant and sea bream creates a harmonious contrast: the soft texture and slight bitterness of eggplant balance the freshness and mild sweetness of sea bream.



# Sea bream carpaccio with bean spread and fennel sauce



2 servings



30 minutes



Easy

## INGREDIENTS

- 160 g sea bream fillet
- 50 ml fish velouté
- 40 g fennel

### Bean spread

- 80 g cooked beans
- 15 ml olive oil
- 3 g garlic
- 10 ml lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

### Emulsion

- 30 ml citrus juice (lemon, orange, lime)
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 30 ml olive oil

## PREPARATION

1. Blend the cooked beans with olive oil, chopped garlic and lemon juice until creamy. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Slice the sea bream thinly and arrange on a plate. Serve the bean spread alongside.
3. Season the fish velouté with chopped fennel, reduce to desired thickness and serve chilled next to the carpaccio.
4. For the citrus emulsion, mix the citrus juices, mustard and honey. While whisking, slowly add the olive oil. Pour over the carpaccio or serve separately.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

The combination of sea bream and fennel sauce is interesting because sea bream offers delicate, juicy and lightly salty flesh, while fennel has a fresh, mildly anise-like flavor.

# Sea bass fillet “en papillote”



1 serving



35 minutes



Easy

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g sea bass fillet
- 100 g baby spinach
- 50 g cherry tomatoes
- 50 g baby carrots
- 30 g pitted olives
- 50 ml lemon juice
- 10 ml olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- baking paper

## PREPARATION

1. Prepare the papillote by placing baby spinach in the center of a sheet of baking paper.
2. Halve the cherry tomatoes and arrange them over the spinach with the peeled baby carrots and olives.
3. Place the sea bass fillet on top, season with salt, pepper, olive oil and lemon juice. Add a few lemon slices for aroma.
4. Close the baking paper like a wrapped candy so steam remains inside during baking.
5. Bake at 180 °C for 15–20 minutes, depending on fillet thickness.
6. Open carefully to preserve the aromatic steam and serve.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

Sea bass has a mild, delicate and juicy texture with a gentle sea flavor, while baby spinach adds slight bitterness and freshness with a soft yet firm texture.



# Poached sea bass fillet on sweet potato with microgreens salad and lemon sauce



2 servings



55 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g sea bass fillet
- 150 g sweet potato
- 10 g microgreens
- 100 ml fish velouté
- 20 ml lemon juice
- 30 ml olive oil
- 500 ml water
- 1/2 lemon
- 1 bay leaf
- salt and pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Pour water into a pot, add half a lemon sliced, a bay leaf, salt and pepper, and heat until gently simmering.
2. Remove any bones and scales from the sea bass fillet, then lightly season with salt and pepper.
3. When the water begins to simmer, reduce the heat and poach the fish for about 6 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillet. After poaching, briefly drain the fillet.
4. Cook and peel the sweet potatoes, mash and season to taste.
5. Remove the skin from the poached fillet, dry it and bake at 180 °C until crisp and golden to create fish-skin chips.
6. For the lemon sauce, mix lemon juice with olive oil, add fish velouté and season to taste.
7. Place mashed sweet potato on a plate and top with the poached sea bass fillet. Add the microgreens salad seasoned with olive oil and salt, and drizzle with lemon sauce.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

Sea bass has a tender, flaky texture with a mild, slightly sweet flavor, making it an excellent match for the sweet, creamy taste of sweet potato.



# Sautéed sea bass fillet with poached asparagus and Istrian Malvasia sauce



1 serving



45 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g sea bass fillet
- 80 g asparagus
- 80 g cherry tomatoes
- 40 g baby carrots
- 50 g butter
- 15 ml olive oil
- 40 g microgreens
- 5 ml lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

### Istrian Malvasia sauce

- 50 ml Istrian Malvasia wine
- 100 ml fish velouté
- salt and pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Poach the asparagus in water with a little lemon juice for a few minutes.
2. Season the sea bass fillet with salt and paper and sauté in hot olive oil until golden brown.
3. Wash and peel the baby carrots and sauté in butter until tender.
4. Halve the cherry tomatoes and briefly sauté in olive oil.
5. For the Istrian Malvasia sauce, heat the fish velouté over medium heat until it reduces. Add the Malvasia wine, allow the alcohol to evaporate, then season with salt and pepper.
6. Arrange the asparagus on the plate, then the cherry tomatoes and carrots. Place the sautéed sea bass fillet on top and garnish with microgreens. Finish with the Istrian Malvasia sauce.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

This recipe brings a harmonious contrast where the natural juiciness of sea bass is well balanced by the mild bitterness of asparagus.



# Grilled sea bass with rosemary potato slices, tomato and grilled lemon



1 serving



55 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g sea bass fillet
- 150 g potatoes
- 80 g tomatoes
- 1 lemon
- 100 ml stock (fish or vegetable)
- 30 g butter
- 20 g flour
- 5 g fresh tarragon
- 30 ml olive oil
- salt and pepper
- rosemary

## PREPARATION

1. Peel and slice the potatoes, season with salt, rosemary and olive oil, and grill until golden brown and tender.
2. Slice the tomatoes and lemon and grill briefly until tender.
3. Season the sea bass fillet with salt and pepper, brush with olive oil and grill for 6–8 minutes, depending on thickness.
4. For the tarragon sauce, melt the butter in a pan, add the flour and stir to form a roux. Gradually add the stock while stirring continuously and cook until the sauce thickens into a smooth velouté. Add the freshly chopped tarragon and season to taste.
5. Place the grilled potatoes and tomato slices on a plate, add the grilled sea bass fillet and pour the tarragon sauce on the side.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

Tarragon adds a distinctive bitterness and fresh acidity that pairs perfectly with grilled sea bass, while the fish's natural fat contributes to a rich, lingering aftertaste.



# Grilled sea bream fillet with chickpea cream and thyme



1 serving



55 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 150 g sea bream fillet
- 75 g cooked chickpeas
- 10 ml olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 30 g onion
- 25 ml vegetable stock
- 20 ml cream
- 10 ml lemon juice
- fresh thyme
- salt and pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Clean, rinse and dry the sea bream fillets, then season with salt and pepper.
2. Grill the fillets in hot olive oil for about 6 minutes, until golden and the meat flakes easily.
3. For the chickpea cream, finely chop the onion and garlic and simmer in olive oil until soft. Add the cooked chickpeas and stock and simmer for 3–4 minutes. Blend until smooth, then stir in the cream and lemon juice and season with thyme, salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve the grilled sea bream fillet with chickpea cream and thyme. Serve warm toasted bread on the side.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

The pairing of sea bream and chickpeas works well because sea bream has tender, juicy meat with a mildly salty fresh flavor, while chickpeas have a full, slightly nutty and creamy taste with a firmer texture.

## Aquaculture facts

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In 2022, global aquaculture production reached 130.9 million tonnes, worth USD 312.8 billion, representing 59% of the world's total fisheries and aquaculture production.

Since 2020, aquaculture has grown by 6.6% and today provides more than 57% of fishery and aquaculture products intended for direct human consumption.

Aquaculture products provide high-quality proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins and minerals essential for health.

Aquaculture contributes to the preservation of aquatic ecosystems.

Aquaculture products are considered high-quality and safe for consumption due to carefully controlled farming conditions.

Aquaculture creates new employment opportunities and contributes to food security and poverty reduction.

Integrated systems such as co-culturing fish with algae or shellfish further improve sustainability by reducing waste and optimizing resources.

## How to recognize a fresh oyster?

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### SMELL

When opening an oyster, one of the first indicators of freshness is its smell. If a strong, unpleasant odor is present, the oyster is neither fresh nor safe to eat.

### APPEARANCE

A fresh oyster must be tightly closed. If the shell is open or the oyster appears dry, it indicates that the oyster is weak, damaged or dead and not suitable for consumption.

### LIQUID

A fresh oyster has plenty of clear liquid that retains its aroma and flavor. A heavier oyster indicates it is still full of seawater, which is a good sign of freshness.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In Croatia, only European flat oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) are farmed, and they are at their highest quality and best flavor in March.

The oyster is a protandric hermaphrodite with rhythmic sex changes, meaning that during its life cycle it first functions as a male and later as a female. This change continues throughout life and is influenced by seawater temperature.

Oyster shells can be recycled:

- Collected shells are returned to the sea, where they serve as substrate for new oyster colonies and help restore ecosystems.
- Due to their high calcium content, ground shells can be used as a natural fertilizer to neutralize soil acidity.
- Shells can also be added to concrete to improve material strength and durability.

# Curry risotto with fried oysters



3 servings



35 minutes



Medium

## INGREDIENTS

- 300 g rice
- 15 g olive oil
- 1 l vegetable or fish stock
- 30 g butter
- 20 g Parmesan cheese
- 60 g onion
- 80 g celery
- 100 g Granny Smith apples
- 100 ml white wine
- 12 cleaned oysters
- 20 g flour
- 30 g cornstarch
- 30 g fava beans
- salt, curry and pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan, add the chopped onion and celery, and sauté for 3–4 minutes until softened.
2. Add the rice and gently simmer with onion and celery until translucent. Pour in the white wine and let the alcohol evaporate. Gradually add the hot stock along with some of the chopped apples, stirring until the rice becomes creamy.
3. Dip the cleaned oysters in a mixture of flour, cornstarch and water, then fry in hot oil for about 2 minutes. Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper.
4. Simmer sliced Granny Smith apples in butter until soft, then flambé with white wine until caramelized.
5. Season the risotto to taste, remove from the heat and mantecate (add butter and Parmesan cheese and vigorously shake the pan to create a creamy texture).
6. Serve the risotto in a bowl, top with fried oysters, flambéed apples and cooked fava beans.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

Curry, with its rich and layered blend of spices, provides depth of flavor, mild heat and aromatic complexity that enhances the delicacy of oysters.

# Oysters on ice



3 servings



25 minutes



Easy

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 fresh oysters
- 80 g Granny Smith apples
- 60 ml lemon juice
- 20 g samphire
- 15 ml olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- ice for serving

## PREPARATION

1. Carefully open the oysters, keep the meat inside and place it in a cool environment.
2. Cut the Granny Smith apple into very small cubes. In a bowl, mix lemon juice with olive oil, salt and pepper, whisk lightly to combine into a dressing and add the diced apple.
3. Arrange the oysters on ice.
4. Top each oyster with a dressing made from lemon juice, apple and olive oil. Garnish each one with a little fresh washed samphire and serve as a refreshing appetizer.

## FLAVOUR NOTE

The dressing enhances the refreshing flavor of the oysters, combining it with the tart notes of apple and lemon, while samphire adds a subtle salty, textural balance.



## Good AquaFood

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Good AquaFood is name of the marketing campaign within the project MARINET. The goal of the campaign is to encourage consumers to better understand aquaculture products by highlighting their nutritional value, quality and safety, supported by scientific evidence and shared practical experience.

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## MARINET - MARICULTURE NETWORK: Implementation of new technologies for diversified sustainable aquaculture targeting healthy society and competitive regions

Our goal is to establish advanced biosecurity framework for the adriatic through innovative aquaculture and integrated mariculture approaches based on environmental, diseases prevention monitoring tools and flat oyster production guidelines that will be shared with SMEs thanks to administrative support. We aim to enhance consumer perception by emphasizing nutritional quality and safety of aquaculture products with marketing evaluations, bioeconomic models, and farming practices dissemination.

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