

Simple Pan-Seared Salmon

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With the addition of the fish fillets, the pan temperature drops; compensate for the heat loss by keeping the heat on medium-high for 30 seconds after adding them. If cooking two or three fillets instead of the full recipe of four, use a 10-inch skillet and medium-high heat for both preheating the pan and cooking the salmon. A splatter screen helps reduce the mess of pan-searing. Serve salmon with a sweet and sour chutney (see related recipe), a fresh salsa, an herb-spiked vinaigrette, or squirt of lemon or lime.

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 salmon fillets (skin-on), each about 6 ounces and 1 to 1 1/4 inches thick (see illustration below)

Table salt and ground black pepper

1 teaspoon canola oil or vegetable oil

Forget the rules about 10 minutes per inch of thickness. Fillets take about 4 1/2 minutes on the first side, 3 1/2 on the second.

Method

1. Heat a 12-inch heavy-bottomed skillet for 3 minutes over high heat. Sprinkle salmon with salt and ground black pepper.

2. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. When oil shimmers (but does not smoke) add fillets skin side down and cook, without moving fillets, until pan regains lost heat, about 30 seconds. Reduce heat to medium-high; continue to cook until skin side is well browned and bottom half of fillets turns opaque, 4 1/2 minutes. Turn fillets and cook, without moving them, until they are no longer translucent on the exterior and are firm, but not hard, when gently squeezed: 3 minutes for medium-rare and 3 1/2 minutes for medium. Remove fillets from pan; let stand 1 minute. Pat with paper towel to absorb excess fat on surface, if desired.

Serve immediately.