

# GRILLED WHOLE FISH

WITH WILD FENNEL, LEMON, AND TAPENADE

by Christopher Lee

*I love to stuff whole fish for the grill with lemon and wild fennel. Wild fennel grows everywhere in the Bay Area and is one of my favorite wild herbs to forage. I look for plants that have all the various parts present—flowers, fronds, and some seeds. Our local fish in springtime is spectacular: rockfish, striper, halibut, and black cod can easily be found in a good fish market. Tapenade adds a lovely, sharp, perfumed element.*

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| 1 whole fish, approximately 2–3 pounds, gutted, with scales and gills removed     | ½ cup Niçoise olives, pitted, chopped                                  |
| 1 cup Provençal or Ligurian olive oil   | ½ cup salt-packed capers, soaked in water 45 minutes, drained, chopped |
| Salt, for seasoning fish cavity   | Zest of ½ orange   |
| 1 large bunch wild fennel (fronds, flowers, and seeds included), coarsely chopped | Zest of ½ lemon  |
| 1 lemon, thickly sliced   | 1 tablespoon chopped garlic  |
| ½ cup oil-cured black olives, pitted, chopped                                     | 6 filets salt-packed anchovies, soaked 30 minutes, drained, chopped    |
| ½ cup green olives (Picholine, Saracena, etc.), pitted, chopped                   | 3 tablespoons chopped parsley  |



Drizzle fish inside and out with olive oil and salt the cavity. Stuff fish with fennel and sliced lemon (weave the cavity shut with a skewer if you wish). To make the tapenade, combine the chopped ingredients—olives, capers, orange zest, lemon zest, garlic, anchovies—and add enough olive oil to make a thick paste.

Build a hot fire in the grill. Grill the fish over medium heat for about 8 minutes on each side, until flesh begins to pull away from the spine. When it is done, carefully place fish on a large platter—it can be fragile, once cooked—and drizzle with rest of olive oil. Serve the tapenade on the side.

*Serves 4*

*Christopher Lee was for many years chef of Chez Panisse restaurant and owner of Eccolo restaurant in Berkeley, California. He now consults to restaurants and cooks in his free time.*