

Fish Fillets with Summer Vegetable Medley

Ingredients (for 4 portions)

- 4 fillets white fish, such as haddock, cod, sole, etc.
- ¼ cup corn starch
- 2 cups fresh paddle cactus (*nopales*); washed, cleaned, sliced and cooked **OR** from bottle; rinsed and drained
- ½ lb (1 large or 2 medium) zucchini; washed, ends removed, halved lengthwise, and sliced
- 2 cups mushrooms; wiped clean, and sliced
- 1 tomato; washed, stem spot removed, and cut into quarters
- 1 bunch squash blossoms (if available); washed
- 2 tbsp *epazote* leaves (if available); washed, and chopped
- ½ onion; peeled and cut into two pieces
- 2 cloves garlic; peeled
- 1-2 *serrano* or jalapeño peppers (optional); washed, stems and seeds removed
- 3 limes; washed (one for juice, two cut in wedges as a side)
- 4 tbsp oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Place tomatoes, one piece of onion, garlic, hot peppers (if using), the juice of one lime, and half a teaspoon of salt in a blender jar. Process for a few seconds, to obtain about one cup of smooth sauce; reserve. Chop the other piece of onion. Warm up two tablespoons of oil in a large pot over medium heat, and add chopped onion; sauté until translucent, then add sliced zucchini. Stir to incorporate, then add sliced mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally, for two minutes, then add cooked cactus. Stir and cook until cactus strips are warm, then add reserved sauce. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, then cover, reducing heat to low; allow to simmer for five minutes. Meanwhile, remove and discard stems, sepals and central stamens from squash blossoms; separate the petals and base into sections. Uncover pot, turn off heat, and stir in cleaned flowers and chopped *epazote* (if these ingredients are not available, omit). Adjust seasoning with more salt and pepper, as needed. Cover pot, and keep warm until serving time. Close to serving time, coat fish fillets with corn starch and season with a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Warm up two tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan over medium heat, then place the fish on a single layer, to fry. When edges start turning opaque, flip fillets and cook on the other side, until flaky and fully cooked. Scoop a generous portion of vegetable medley on a dinner plate, then place a portion of fish on top, and garnish with a squash petal and a couple of zucchini slices. Serve with lime wedges and a bread basket on the side.

Other summer produce may be added or used instead, such as bell peppers, or cooked new potatoes. Green beans make a nice substitute for paddle cactus if not available, as homegrown nasturtium or calendula petals could be added instead of squash blossoms.