

Barbecued Fish based on Hank Shaw's <https://honest-food.net/barbecued-fish-recipe/> ...two words you don't hear together a lot. That's a shame, because cooking low and slow over smoky heat is a great way to cook fish. Sure, fried fish are good, but BBQ fish adds smoky flavor plus whatever barbecue rub or sauce you use, and gentle heat is a great insurance policy against overcooking.

Here are a few tips to make your barbecued fish better.

- Work with fillets or steaks. While there's nothing wrong with barbecued whole fish, the skin doesn't add anything because it's not crispy — unlike grilled fish.
- Salt your fillets for 30 minutes before cooking, in the fridge. This seasons the fish, plus keeps it cool so it won't cook too quickly in the barbecue.
- Keep the skin and scales on the fillet. The skin and especially the scales protect the fish from the heat and allow you to really go slow and low. If you have a pre-scaled fish, you will still do fine. Just be sure to oil the skin and grill grates well.
- Fish with sturdy scales and skin are better, but since you are barbecuing not grilling, you can get away with more delicately skinned fish like trout or mackerel.
- Work with clean grill grates and slick the skin with a little oil to prevent the fillets from sticking.
- Carefully consider which rub or sauce you might use. A really robust sauce like a Kansas City style BBQ sauce might be too much for most fish — but just right for a strongly flavored fish like bluefish, king mackerel, amberjack or tuna. Original author Hank Shaw prefers to use South Carolina BBQ sauce, saying that the mustard based-sauce is a lot lighter in flavor, and works really well with fish. Personally, I don't like it at all. I prefer, and Hank says, **you can skip it altogether and just enjoy your fish with salt, smoke and maybe some lemon or lime juice.**
- Apply your sauce only once. Too much sauce overpowers the fish.
- Wood choice is up to you. Hank says he always uses alder or oak for fish, but any wood you like will work — it's not barbecued for hours, so the smoke flavor is mild.
- What sort of fish to use? Pretty much anything, so long as it's decent sized. Obviously teeny fish aren't what you want, nor are really thin fillets like those of sole.

You have a lot of leeway as to what fish or sauce to choose. Author Hank Shaw likes fillets of bass with a mustard-based sauce, but says to use anything you want, and even use thick steaks like salmon or tuna.

Ingredients

- 4 fish fillets or steaks, skin/ scales on
- Vegetable oil for greasing skin of fish
- Salt. Optionally, a grind of black pepper
- 1/2 cup BBQ sauce (optional)

Instructions

Salt the fillets well and put in the fridge for 30 minutes while you get your barbecue ready. Clean your grill grates well and, if you are working with a scaled fish, slick the grates with some vegetable oil.

Preheat the grill to anywhere from 200F to 250F. When you're ready to cook, slick the skin side of the fish with vegetable oil, from head back to tail, going with the grain of the scales. Paint the flesh side of the fillets with sauce, or a dusting of barbecue, or just a grind of black pepper if you want to stay simple.

Set the fillets skin side down in the grill, cover the grill and cook as slowly as you can stand. A thin, 1/2-inch fillet, barbecued at 200F, was perfect in 45 minutes. Slower is better - - you get more smoky flavor. Serve your fish on the skin -- eat by picking the meat off the skin with a fork. Serve with lemon or lime wedges, a vegetable and either rice or potato salad.