

# The Dish

## Miracle cures The pleasures of home-curing

**GIZZI ERSKINE**



I was a teenager when I first heard about sushi, and I remember thinking: “Why would anyone eat raw fish?” A few years later I went to Asakusa, a brilliant Japanese restaurant in north London. It was literally love at first bite.

The stigma surrounding eating seafood raw has lessened, but some people still treat it with suspicion, which is fairly ironic considering how fond the British are of smoked salmon.

Curing is a process that draws out moisture, creating conditions that kill off bacteria. It was a key means of preserving fish before refrigeration. Most cultures retain a traditional dish that derives from this: the Scandinavian variation is gravadlax, which means “buried salmon” — a term that originates from when fishermen would salt their catch, then bury it in the sand to ferment.

Ceviche is really in vogue in Britain. It’s a Peruvian dish of raw fish or shellfish in which the fish has been cured or macerated with freshly squeezed citrus juice and spice marinade. The trend is for Peruvian-Japanese fusion, which was pioneered by Nobu Matsuhisa of the eponymous Nobu restaurant in London. His trademark dish is “new-style sashimi”, in which the fish is cured in citrus and seared with hot oil. Raw and cured fish are perfectly safe to make at home. Make sure the fish is super fresh (ask your fishmonger for sashimi-grade).

I’ve included a take on the Scandi favourite, gravadlax; a home-cooked friendly version of sushi and a “new-style sashimi”. They’re really easy to make, cost a fraction of the price you pay in restaurants or supermarkets, and are ideal for the summer months ■

For Japanese products, visit [japancentre.com](http://japancentre.com)



## Coriander, chilli and lime-cured salmon with avocado

**This is a cross between gravadlax and ceviche and is a super-fresh starter or light lunch.**

**PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**CURING TIME: 24 HOURS**

**SERVES: 8**

**1.** Lay the salmon — the best you can afford — on a large roasting tray or flat dish. Add the rest of the curing ingredients to a food processor and blitz until smooth. Rub the marinade all over the fish, wrap and place in the fridge. After 12 hours, wipe off the marinade and pop back in the fridge overnight.

**2.** To make the salad dressing, mix together the garlic, lime juice and oil and set aside. In a separate bowl, mix together the avocados, radishes, spring onions, chilli and coriander, then add the dressing.

**3.** Thinly slice the cured salmon, then lay 6-8 slices on each plate, with a few tablespoons of the avocado salad.

### CURING

800g – 1kg side of sustainably sourced salmon, skinned and boned

1 large bunch of coriander, roughly chopped

2 green chillies

1 tbsp black pepper

1 tsp coriander seeds

Zest of four limes (reserve the juice for the dressing)

2 tbsp tequila

150g sugar

130g salt

### FOR THE SALAD

½ garlic clove, crushed

1 tbsp lime juice

2 tbsp olive oil

2 ripe avocados, finely diced

2 radishes, finely diced

2 spring onions, finely diced

1 red or green chilli, finely diced

A handful of fresh coriander, finely diced

## Hot splash sashimi

Raw sea bass macerated in yuzu (use lemon if you can't find it) and soy, then seared with a splash of smoking-hot sesame oil dressing. Perfect for summer.

**PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES**  
**COOKING TIME: 5 MINUTES**  
**SERVES: 4**

*½ tsp black and white sesame seeds*

*1 fillet wild sea bass, the freshest and best you can afford, cut into thin-medium sashimi strips*

*1cm of root ginger, peeled and finely julienned*

*3 chives, cut into 1 ½in lengths*

*3 tbsp Japanese soy sauce*

*3 tbsp yuzu, available in Japanese supermarkets, or lime juice*

*6 pinches of Korean chilli threads, or a large dried Spanish chilli thinly shredded*

*1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil*

*2 tsp sesame oil*

**1.** Toast the sesame seeds in a pan until fragrant and golden, then pop in a small bowl and set aside.

**2.** Arrange the fish on a serving plate in a neat line. Sprinkle a good pinch of sea salt and the ginger and chives over the fish. Mix together the soy sauce and yuzu and pour liberally over the fish. Sprinkle over the chilli threads and sesame seeds.

**3.** When you're ready to serve, heat the oils in a small pan until they begin to smoke, then pour over fish using a metal spoon — it will sizzle and sear the bass as soon as it makes contact. Serve immediately.



### TOP TIP

*Make sure the sashimi slices don't overlap too much. You want each one to be covered by the dressing.*





## LA-style crispy tuna rice

A sushi fusion often found in the depths of LA. Dirty and delicious.

**SERVES: 4**

**PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES**

### FOR THE TUNA

250g sashimi-fresh tuna, cut from the loin

1-2 tbsp masago roe (optional, but recommended)

1 tsp sesame oil

1-2 tbsp Asian chilli sauce, sriracha

2 spring onions, very finely chopped

2 tbsp Kewpie Japanese mayonnaise (made with rice vinegar)

### FOR THE CRISPY RICE

175g sushi rice

350g water

1 tbsp golden caster sugar

2 tbsp rice wine vinegar

2 tbsp butter

1 tbsp vegetable oil

Splash of soy sauce

1 fresh green jalapeño pepper, very thinly sliced

1. Rinse the rice until the water runs clear. Add to a medium pan with the water and ¼ tsp of sea salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat. Cover with a lid and cook for 17 minutes (the rice should be nearly cooked and the water almost absorbed). Leave to steam with the lid on for five minutes.

2. Put the sugar, rice vinegar and ½ tsp of sea salt in a pan. Cook on a medium heat until the sugar has dissolved. Pour over the cooked rice and stir.

3. Chop the tuna by hand as finely as possible. In a mixing bowl, add the remaining tuna ingredients, stir, cover, then place in the refrigerator for up to one hour.

4. Once the rice is cool enough to handle, take 4 large tbsp and pack tightly into 4 thin patties. Make sure your hands are oiled or they will end up covered in rice. Heat the butter, oil and soy in a pan and fry the rice cake block on both sides until crisp and golden brown.

5. Split the spicy tuna on top of the rice. Cut each rice dish into eight and finish with a thin slice of jalapeño on top of each triangle. Serve warm, with a small bowl of soy sauce for dipping.

## On the Bottle

A summer party with a Majestic twist

**BOB TYRER**



**AT** an intimate tasting in Hedonism Wines — the Mayfair oenothèque for zillionaires — I sat next to a cheerful surgeon, who confided that his favourite barbecue wine is Château Lynch-Bages 2005, the extrovert fifth-growth Pauillac, which was on sale for just over £180 a bottle. Great with charred wagyu steak at £200 a kilo.

On the other hand, I have a powerful and influential friend who buys fine bespoke suits but doesn't see why he should spend more than single figures on what he drinks. In fact, he's just asked me to pick the wines for his summer party. They have to come from Majestic for less than 10 quid a bottle, he says, and there will be seafood, salads and a spit-roast pig on the menu.

And on the third hand, another powerful and influential friend, who would love to encounter Lynch-Bages at someone else's table but isn't going to buy it for himself, has pointed out that I frequently recommend little-known wines from obscure websites that only sell by the case. How about suggesting a few bottles that one can just pop out for?

So, keenly aware on which side my bread is buttered, I popped into Majestic, the huge, nationwide chain of warehouses that used to sell only by the 12-bottle case but nowadays does so in sixes, which isn't too heavy to carry home if there's nothing left for the bus fare.

I must admit two personal niggles. Majestic's single-bottle prices are often unrealistically high. And by the time I've toured a warehouse, looking at familiar labels, I'm bored stiff. Nonetheless, there is plenty of wine worth having, and the staff in my local Docklands branch are delightful and well informed. It took no time to find three under £10 for my fine-suited friend. You know who you are, so enjoy ■



**VIÑALBA RESERVADO MALBEC, MENDOZA 2012**  
Argentinian malbec is made for scorched meat, and this bright, plummy version won't clash with the adventurous salads on the menu (single bottle, £11.99; multi-buy £7.99)



**GOLDWATER SAUVIGNON BLANC, MARLBOROUGH 2013**  
Classic Kiwi SB, with freshness, zip and a crunchy texture for seafood and buffet fodder (£11.99/£8.99)



**VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI, MONTE SCHIAVO 2013**  
Gentler white for SB haters, with real personality and zingy fruit (£8.99/£6.74; all wines this week from Majestic.co.uk)