



Tilapia Wrapped in Banana Leaf

Recipe from *Back to the Family* by Art Smith



In Central America and other parts of the tropics, many dishes are wrapped in banana leaves, giving them a very special flavor. I get mine in the frozen foods sections of Latin American supermarkets here in Chicago. I also have a banana leaf tree in my kitchen, but I would shoot anyone who tried to cut a leaf from it.

Ingredients: Serves 8

Red Pepper Sauce:

- 1 jar (8 ounces) roasted red peppers , drained
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Tilapia Wrapped in Banana Leaf:

- 1 bag frozen banana leaves , thawed and cut into 5- or 6-inch squares
- 8 fillets tilapia (6 ounces each)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Olive oil

To make red pepper sauce: Place the peppers, garlic and oregano in a blender.

Puree while adding the olive oil in a steady stream. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a squeeze bottle or a bowl and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350°. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

To make tilapia: Blanch the banana leaves by plunging them into the boiling water for 1 minute. Remove and immediately submerge in ice water for 1 minute. Drain. Lay with the smooth side of the leaves up on a baking sheet lightly greased with olive oil.

Place each fillet skin side up on a banana leaf and season with salt and pepper. Fold each corner of the leaf over as if you were wrapping a gift. Flip the fish over gently so that the seam side is down.

Place the fish in the oven and cook for 20 minutes.

To serve: Remove from the oven and let rest for 5 minutes. Cut a slit across the top of the banana leaf, and drizzle or spoon the red pepper sauce over the fish. Serve hot.

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