

Halibut, Peas, Peas, Peas & Grapefruit

Did we mention peas? Well, they're the fresh, green essence of spring, and when they start to come in, we often find ourselves using multiple varieties—like English peas, snap peas, pea shoots—in a single dish. Spring is also halibut season in California, and the mild flavor of that lean white fish is a good match with acidic ingredients like grapefruit. We think you'll also find our incredibly simple yogurt “sauce” (really nothing more than a swoosh of yogurt topped with a sprinkling of tangy sumac) to be a revelation.

SERVES 4

1 lb English peas in the pod

1 red grapefruit

1 cup sugar snap peas

1 small avocado, halved, pitted, peeled, cut into large dice, rinsed under cool running water, and drained

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 cup loosely packed pea shoots

4 (1/4-lb) halibut fillets, each about 1 inch thick

Kosher salt

2 tablespoons rice oil or other neutral-flavored oil

1/2 lemon

4 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt

3/4 teaspoon ground sumac

16 fresh tarragon leaves

To prepare the peas: Shell the peas; you should have about 1 cup. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, fill a medium bowl with water and ice. Add the peas to the boiling water and blanch for 1 1/2 minutes. Drain immediately and plunge the peas into the ice bath to halt the cooking. As soon as the peas are cold, remove from the ice water and spread on a paper towel to dry.

To make the salad: Cut a thin slice off the top and bottom of the grapefruit to reveal the flesh. Stand the grapefruit upright and, using a sharp knife and following the contour of the fruit, slice downward, cutting off the peel, pith, and membrane in wide strips. Then, holding the fruit over a medium bowl, cut along each side of the membrane between the segments, releasing the freed segments and any juice into the bowl. Retrieve the segments, a few at a time, cut crosswise into thirds, and return to the bowl.

Cut off the stem end of each snap pea and pull away the string that runs the length of the pod. Quarter each pea crosswise and add to the bowl with the grapefruit. Top with the reserved peas, avocado, olive oil, and then two-thirds of the pea shoots. Wait to toss the salad until after you prepare the fish.

To sear the fish: Line a large plate with paper towels and set near the stove. Preheat a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat for 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, pat the halibut fillets dry with a paper towel. Season the fillets on both sides with salt.

Add the rice oil to the hot pan and heat for about 1 minute, until just starting to smoke. Tilt the pan to spread the oil evenly over the bottom. Carefully add the fish to the pan, placing the fillets away from you to avoid being splattered with oil. Using a long, wide spatula, press down lightly on the fish for 1 minute. Continue cooking for 3 minutes longer, until the fish is golden brown and caramelized on the underside. Flip the fish and cook for 2 minutes longer, or to desired doneness. Transfer the fish to the towel-lined plate and squeeze the juice from the lemon half evenly over the top.

To serve: Season the salad with a pinch of salt and toss to mix evenly. Dollop 1 tablespoon of the yogurt on each individual serving plate and, using the back of a spoon, spread the yogurt into a “swoosh” shape. Sprinkle the sumac over the yogurt. Place a halibut fillet on the center of each plate and spoon the pea salad around the halibut. Garnish with the remaining pea shoots and tarragon leaves.