The Best Baked Salmon Recipe You’ll Make Again and Again

5 MIN READ

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BY HEATHER HURLOCK

Fifteen minutes. One pan.

I make this recipe once a week. It’s quick, easy, and my whole family loves it, which is why it earned a permanent spot in my rotation. I can make it on autopilot and it always comes out perfect.

Wild-caught salmon delivers one of nature’s most concentrated sources of high quality omega-3 fatty acids, supporting brain health, heart function, and reduced inflammation. The olive oil adds heart-protective fats, garlic has bioactive compounds linked to healthy blood pressure, and a hit of lemon brightens everything and adds some vitamin C. Ready in 15 minutes, start to finish.

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Ingredients

Serves 4

- 4 wild-caught salmon fillets (about 6 ounces each), sockeye or coho recommended
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (you can use ¾ teaspoon garlic powder if you’re in a rush)
- 1 teaspoon Italian herb blend (or herbes de Provence)
- 1 medium lemon
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper (a pinch of you’re using ground pepper)

Instructions

1. Prep the pan: Preheat your oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Arrange salmon fillets on the sheet and season with salt and pepper.

2. Make the herb oil: Stir together olive oil, garlic, herbs, and juice from half the lemon. Spread over the salmon tops and sides so everything is coated.

3. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes: The salmon flakes easily when it's cooked through. Broil for 1 to 2 minutes at the end if you want a little more color.

4. Serve Garnish with fresh thyme or parsley if you have it. Serve immediately.

Make It Yours:

- **Lemon slices:** Slice the remaining lemon half. Place one slice on each fillet before baking.
- **Spicier:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes or other favorite spices to the herb oil.
- **Richer:** Drizzle with a little extra olive oil right out of the oven.

BONUS: How to Choose the Cleanest Salmon

Not all salmon is created equal. Here's what to look for:

Best choice: Wild-caught Alaskan sockeye. It has the highest omega-3 content, the most antioxidants (that deep red color comes from astaxanthin), and the lowest contamination risk, sockeye eat low on the food chain, which means fewer accumulated toxins.

Also excellent: Wild-caught Alaskan coho. Slightly milder flavor, a bit leaner, but still high in omega-3s and very clean. A great option if sockeye tastes too “fishy” for you.

What to avoid: Farmed Atlantic salmon. It’s higher in inflammatory omega-6 fats, often contains antibiotics and synthetic colorants, and carries more PCBs and other contaminants.

How to verify: Look for “wild-caught Alaska” on the label or the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) blue certification mark. Alaska prohibits salmon farming entirely and has some of the strictest fishery management in the world. If the package just says “Atlantic salmon” without specifying wild-caught, it’s likely farmed.

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WRITTEN BY:



Heather Hurlock