

Salmon Sandwich Al Pastor/BBQ Flavors

1/2 cup of store bought BBQ sauce (We used Sweet Baby Ray's since it was on hand from Costco)
2 TB pineapple juice or 1 TB frozen concentrated pineapple juice + 1 TB water
2 TB lime juice
2 TB fresh cilantro chopped
1 canned chipotle in adobo, chopped fine
1 tsp adobo from the chipotle in adobo can
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 pound fresh raw salmon (skin removed)
2 tablespoons freshly grated queso anejo cheese (could substitute enchilado, or even parmesan)
1/4 cup Panko (preferred) or other slightly toasted bread crumbs, **optional**
More Panko (preferred) or other slightly toasted bread crumbs for coating patties
4 portions Mexican cheese, such as oaxaca, machego, chichuchua, or substitute something like jack or even cheddar
4 pickled jalapenos, sliced, **optional**
4 large hamburger buns
1 large ripe avocado
4 large slices bacon
lettuce
a Fresh Ripe Pineapple
1/4 cup olive oil or other vegetable oil for frying

In a small bowl combine the BBQ sauce, pineapple juice, lime juice, cilantro, chipotle, and adobo and mix well to combine. Set aside.

Chop the salmon very finely. You could use a food processor, but be very careful not to turn it to mush. Place in a bowl with queso anejo, the 1/2 tsp of salt, 2 tablespoons of the BBQ sauce mixture (saving the rest of the BBQ sauce mixture for serving) and 1/4 cup of panko bread crumbs **if using**. Mix with a spoon until just combined.

Form into 4 equally sized burgers about the size of your large buns.

HINT: We keep at hand what was a can of crab about 4" in diameter. We cut both sides off and use it as a mold for various things like this. We put some parchment paper on a tray, then we weighed the salmon, divided by 4 to get the weight of a patty, tared the scale and remove the weight of a patty and put it in the ring pressing down firmly to bring it together. Remove the ring. Tare the scale and repeat for the rest of the patties. OR, use the techniques referred to in the Serious Eats recipe mentioned in the online article.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours which will help hold them together

Put a fair amount of the panko (or bread crumbs) on a plate or in a large flat container. Carefully place a chilled salmon patty on the panko and press a little. Carefully turn it over and repeat. you can pick up some more panko and press on top. Repeat for the 4 patties, getting as much coating all over as you can.

Put them back in the fridge.

On a grill pan or a frying pan if you don't have a grill pan (but we suggest getting one, they're fun), heat some oil till smoking. CAREFULLY wipe most of it off with tongs and paper towel. (This is a tip we picked up from the amazing Chinese Cookbook writer, Fuchsia Dunlop who does it with her carbon steel woks.) Spray or brush some oil on each side of the pineapple slices and then grill each side until browned and tender. About 3-5 minutes per side depending on your stove. With a paring knife remove the core, making a pineapple ring. You could also cook the pineapple rings in a broiler, but we've found the grill pan is far more effective.

Mash the avocado adding salt to taste. Slice the jalapenos.

Fry up the bacon till crisp. When done cut each in half making 8 pieces. (HINT: There are a lot of theories on how to cook perfect bacon: In the microwave between sheets of paper towel. In the oven. Fried up in a skillet as has been done for ages, or maybe put about 1/4 cup of water in the skillet first so it cooks some and lays flat and when the water evaporates starts to crisp up. This last one is what we've been doing of late, but find what works for you best.)

Add oil to a large cast iron skillet (or we are real fans of the lighter weight carbon steel pans) and heat over medium-high heat until shimmering. VERY carefully place the salmon patties into the pan and cook, turning once or twice, until lightly browned on both sides and medium-rare within (about 115 to 120°F on an instant-read thermometer) adjusting the heat to keep things sizzling, but not burning the panko/bread crumbs.

NOTE: We do not like our salmon overcooked and for us cooked it about 2 min per side on our rather high heat stove. The panko wasn't as browned as it might get if you cook longer, but how you want your salmon done should be paramount. When we took ours out of the pan it was red/pink inside. That's how we like it. You could play with the amount of heat in the pan in searing the outsides to brownness, keeping the insides more 'rare'. WARNING: they may fall apart a bit if you aren't careful, BUT, if you get them on the bun you can press it together and nobody will ever know.

TIP: An even better way to get browned crispy on your panko if you are not going to cook the salmon for long is to pre-brown it. Put the panko in a dry skillet (cast iron is really good for this) over medium heat. Brown the panko. Don't make it REAL brown as there will be some more browning. Be careful, once it starts to brown it can get to dark brown or burnt pretty quickly. Have another cool pan available to dump it in to cool it off quickly.

Toast, grill or otherwise heat the hamburger buns. Put a portion of cheese (however much you like) on the bun top and melt by the method of your choice (broiler, microwave, etc).

To assemble place a piece of lettuce on the bottom of a bun, then 1/4 of the mashed avocado, then two pieces of bacon, then the jalapeno slices to taste, then the salmon 'burger', then a ring of caramelized pineapple. Pour more BBQ sauce over each burger and top with the melted cheese side of the bun.

Roasted Pineapple Salsa

4 1/2" thick round slices fresh pineapple
1/4 cup mild olive oil or vegetable oil (you can get away with less, to taste)
1 cup red onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
1/4 cup lime juice or more to taste
2 fresh habanero chiles, minced, including seeds
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Cook the pineapple rings as described in the Salmon Sandwich recipe above then let cool to room temperature. Remove the core with a paring knife then dice into pieces about 1/8". Mix the pineapple and the rest of the ingredients in a bowl adding additional lime juice and salt to taste.

This salsa would be really good with fish tacos, or many other tacos of your choice or perhaps over a grilled chicken.

But we had it with tortilla chips. If you find the salsa a bit 'clunky' for the chips, just dice the pineapple and onion smaller.

Mango, Jicama and Cucumber Salad

1 large mango, peeled, pitted and cubed.
Jicama, about 1/2 pound, peeled and cubed
1 cucumber, peeled and cubed
1/2 tsp pure ground chile such as ancho or guajillo
salt
one or two fresh limes

In a non-reactive bowl mix the mango, jicama, cucumber and chile powder. Salt to taste. Lime juice to taste.