

## GRILLED MACKEREL, HASSELBACK POTATOES AND SAMPHIRE



*If ever there was a fish utterly suited to the wood fire it is mackerel, its oily flesh charring to perfection over glowing. Stuffed with rosemary and lemon, the aromas alone will transport you back to holiday barbecues.*



800–900g (1lb 12oz–2lb) new potatoes  
4 tbsp olive oil  
200g (7oz) samphire  
4 good-sized mackerel, gutted (about 350g/12oz each)  
2 cloves of garlic, chopped  
1 lemon, sliced  
4 sprigs of fresh rosemary  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
320–340°C (600–645°F)  
SERVES 4

Take a potato and lay it on a chopping board. Use a sharp knife to carefully cut slices three-quarters of the way through, all the way along the potato, about 2mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$  in) apart. Make sure you don't cut all the way through – the slices should all remain attached at the base. Repeat with the rest of the potatoes, putting them into a roasting tin as you go. Drizzle over most of the olive oil and season with plenty of black pepper, tossing to mix. Hold off on the salt, as samphire is intensely salty. You can get the potatoes prepped about an hour before you cook, providing they are well coated with oil. When you are ready to cook, slide the potatoes into the oven and leave to roast for 20–25 minutes.

Put the samphire into a bowl and toss with the rest of the olive oil, seasoning with a grind of pepper as you go. Set aside. Make a few deep diagonal cuts along each side of the fish, then rub the garlic into the slits. Stuff the lemon slices and rosemary sprigs into each gut cavity and season the outside of each fish with a little salt and plenty of black pepper.

Remove the potatoes from the oven and set aside while you cook the fish. Use the metal peel to bring a good bed of embers into the centre of the fire and rest your grill over them. Allow it to heat up for 5 minutes, then slide it out, lay the mackerel on it and lift the grill on to the embers. Grill the fish for 5 minutes on each side, then transfer them to a serving plate and loosely cover with foil to keep warm while you finish the potatoes. If you have a fish cage it is really useful for turning the fish over in one go, but do make sure you heat it up on the grill before adding the fish to it, as this will prevent them sticking.

Use the metal peel to push the embers back into the corner of the oven. Scatter the samphire around the potatoes and slide the tray on to the hot spot where the embers were. The samphire will take just 5 minutes or so to roast – you want it to have plenty of crunch. Rest the grilled mackerel on the vegetables and take to the table.