



Kusima mada: Fiji's first sustainable seafood cookbook showcases women in fisheries

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Food is very much a part of our culture and lives in the Pacific, and it brings families and friends together. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has partnered with Chef Jason Allport to put together Fiji's first sustainable seafood cookbook 'Kusima Mada', with over 80 new unique recipes using local seafood and produce. The word 'kusima' is Fijian (iTaukei) and describes the pinnacle of appreciation of seafood. Kusima mada is, therefore, an invitation to come experience the mouth-watering taste of seafood.

The cookbook uses delicious, easy-to-make seafood recipes and vibrant photographs to recognise and celebrate fisherwomen and the vital role they play in terms of food security and livelihoods to support their families. The photographs show women hunting for eels in upland rivers, collecting bountiful seagrapes (*nama*) from the sea, harvesting mud crabs from mangrove areas, fishing off reef dropoffs, and selling their seafood at municipal markets.

Recipes are grouped to highlight the interconnectedness of different habitats in island ecosystems such as Fiji – from mountain rivers to mangrove forests to coral reefs

and out to the open sea – recognising that each plays an important part in the health, wealth and survival of Pacific Island people.

The cookbook hopes to inspire its readers to make sustainable seafood choices as a consumer. It has a simple message: get to know the different size limits for fish species and any national bans in place to protect a species and promote its recovery, and follow them. Size limits are linked to the size at which fish and invertebrates reach maturity, and are a critical fisheries management tool. The timing of the book is opportune as the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries, in partnership with cChange and other non-governmental partners, gets ready to launch a national 'Set Size Campaign' to promote size limits in fisheries species.

The cookbook is dedicated to 'all the women in the coastal fisheries sector who contribute to the food security and the livelihoods of their families, and to Fiji's national economy. Their local and traditional knowledge of the freshwater and marine life on our doorstep is key to our long-term health, sustainability and well-being. Such knowledge is priceless, and it is given freely – all we have to do is sit quietly and listen.'

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Cold smoked yellowfin tuna with salsa verde and nama salad

Serves 4. Preparation time: 30 minutes

- 300 g cold smoked yellowfin tuna
- 2 cups fresh *nama*
- 2 limes, cut in half
- 8 thin slices of fresh baguette, toasted
- 2 chillies, thinly sliced

Salsa verde

- 1 tbs olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 1 cup coriander, finely chopped
- 1 cup mint (leaves only no stalks), finely chopped
- ¼ cup capers, washed, finely chopped
- ¼ cup mint jelly (or ¼ cup chopped mint leaves)
- 6 spring onion stalks, cleaned and finely sliced
- ¼ cup dill gherkins, finely diced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Grill the limes in a pan or on a chargrill until caramelised. Heat one tablespoon of oil in a frying pan. Add the onion and sauté until soft, and then cool. Mix coriander, mint, capers, sautéed onion, mint jelly, spring onion, gherkins, and extra virgin olive oil in a mixing bowl. Cover and set aside in the refrigerator.

Rinse the *nama* under cold water to remove any excess sand and let stand in a colander to drain. When ready to assemble, mix half the *nama* with the *salsa verde*. To serve, layer the tuna on the toasted bread, followed by a spoonful of *salsa verde*. Finish with the reserved *nama* and thin strips of chilli. Serve with the grilled lime.

Cold smoked yellowfin tuna with *salsa verde* and *nama* salad - ©Sangeeta Mangubhai

