

# WILD ALASKAN SALMON WITH WHITE BEANS, COUNTRY HAM, AND SPINACH WITH LEMON—ROSEMARY BUTTER

I always say that the only time we should be eating wild-caught salmon is when the bears are enjoying it in Alaska, which is late May to early October. Wild salmon from the Pacific, known as Chinook, is sometimes sold as either coho or king salmon. This fatty fish is rich in health benefits and flavor, so don't miss the opportunity to prepare this recipe during wild salmon season. For a very special treat, watch for Copper River salmon starting in May. A prized catch for its texture and fat, you have to act fast, as the season only lasts three weeks.

The subtle flavors of the white beans and spinach are wonderful in this recipe, and the Lemon–Rosemary Butter, a simple-to-prepare compound butter, adds a brightness and luscious mouth-feel. While rustic enough to serve for a family meal, you can also plate this dish for an elegant dinner with friends. Garnish the composed dish with sliced heirloom cherry tomatoes and squeeze some fresh lemon juice over the plate to finish with a bit of brightness. If desired, add a pat of the Lemon–Rosemary Butter (p. 171) at the end for some more buttery rich goodness.

## SERVES 4

<b>FOR THE FISH</b>	One 2-ounce piece Kentucky country ham (or other good-quality country ham)
1 whole side wild Alaskan salmon (1½-pound fillet), cut into four 6-ounce portions	2 bay leaves
Extra-virgin olive oil	2 to 3 teaspoons kosher salt, depending on the saltiness of the ham, divided
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Freshly ground black pepper	3 to 4 tablespoons Lemon–Rosemary Butter (p. 171)
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon	2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons Lemon–Rosemary Butter (p. 171), plus more for serving	4 cups packed fresh baby spinach leaves
<b>FOR THE WHITE BEANS AND SPINACH</b>	Freshly ground black pepper
½ pound dry white beans, rinsed and soaked overnight	A squeeze of fresh lemon juice and halved heirloom cherry tomatoes, for garnish

### PREPARE THE SALMON

Carefully remove the skin and fatty belly parts (dark flesh) from the fillets with a sharp knife. Also remove any remaining pin bones. Pat the fish dry with paper towels and place on a large plate. Drizzle each fillet with olive oil and then sprinkle both sides with salt, black pepper, and lemon zest. Rub the fillets well and place them flat in a gallon-size zip-top bag. Remove the air and seal, then place the bag in a large dish, keeping the fillets in a single layer, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

### MAKE THE WHITE BEANS

Drain the beans that have been soaked overnight and put them in a medium saucepan. Cover with water by about 2 inches and add the country ham, bay leaves, and 2 teaspoons salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 50 to 60 minutes (this length of time gives the beans a nice creaminess). →