



# How to Cook Two Meals Kamchatkan *Ukha* (Fish Salmon with

The following recipes and photos were provided by Alexander Bugaev from the Kamchatka Fishery and Oceanography Research Institute (KamchatNIRO) in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

I bring to your attention the following recipes that will make two meals from a single fish. No matter which species of Pacific salmon you may have – any species will result in success. For my personal taste, both meals are delicious when cooked using fresh Chinook or sockeye salmon. The optimal fish body weight is 2.5–3.0 kg. If you have a bigger fish, you should also use the head, which contributes a wonderful flavor to soup. All the other ingredients for both meals are available in supermarkets almost everywhere in the world (Fig. 1). The seasonings required are simple and basic: salt, pepper, bay (laurel) leaf, parsley, and fennel.

## The first meal – Kamchatkan *Ukha* (fish soup)

There are many ways of preparing *Ukha* and one universal idea. The best *Ukha* is always made of freshly-caught fish cooked on a fire. Of course when you live an urban lifestyle, you may not be allowed to cook it on a fire. But you can cook *Ukha* easily on the stove in your kitchen. An indispensable condition of Kamchatkan *Ukha* (besides using salmon) is a transparent broth and compact pieces of fish that are not boiled to softness. The technique is to put all the ingredients into the pot one-by-one and not to stir them in the pot during cooking. I usually use a big pot of 5-6 liters. All ingredients are given for this volume.



Kamchatkan *Ukha* served and ready to eat.

### Ingredients

salmon head, tail, ventral area with fins<sup>1</sup>, and spine (optional)

1 tablespoon salt

3 bay leaves

1 large carrot, peeled

5-6 large potatoes, peeled

1 onion, peeled

several sprigs of parsley, chopped

several sprigs of fennel, chopped

2-5 pepper corns

juice of 1/3 lemon

1-2 tablespoons vegetable oil (optional)

### Method

1. Fill the pot half-full with cold water. Add salt and bay leaves to the pot and bring the water to a boil.



Fig. 2. Kamchatkan *Ukha* just prior to serving.

2. Meanwhile, clean the fish (do not scale it) and wash it in cold water. Cut off the head, tail, and ventral portion of the body with the fins. These parts will be used in *Ukha*. The rest of the salmon will be used for cooking the second meal. You can remove the spine and use it for *Ukha*,

but the spine should be removed from the pot after the broth is ready (between step 4 and 5). Cut the head into two symmetrical parts (use the sagittal section<sup>2</sup>) and cut the ventral area with fins into several single-size portions.

3. Chop carrot, potatoes, and onion into cubes in a size according to your wish. If you don't like onion, put the whole onion (without chopping) into the water with the salt and bay leaves in Step 1 and remove the onion from the pot later when broth is ready.

4. When the water reaches a boil, add chopped carrot, potato, and onion one-by-one and return water to a boil.

5. Put the pieces of fish into the pot, but don't stir. After the water returns to a boil again, add chopped parsley, fennel, pepper corns, and lemon juice. If the fish you used does not contain much fat, then you may wish to add some vegetable oil.

6. Remove pot from the heat and let stand for 20–30 minutes (Fig. 2) and have fun! This meal is delicious hot or cooled.

<sup>1</sup> Ventral body area of the fish is the underside including the belly flap and ventral and anal fins.

<sup>2</sup> To make a sagittal cut, place the knife on the head so the cut is oriented front to back and bisects the snout and top of the head.

# From a Single Fish: (Soup) & Stewed Vegetables

By: Alex Bugaev



Fig. 1. Basic ingredients for both recipes

## The second meal – Salmon with Stewed Vegetables

As is the case for preparation of *Ukha*, there are many versions of how to cook salmon with stewed vegetables. I prefer a very simple cooking method because the more ingredients and seasonings we use, the less our understanding of what we eat.



Salmon with stewed vegetables served with boiled rice.

### Ingredients

salmon fillets cut into single-size portions (5-7 cm)  
1 large carrot  
2 sweet bell peppers (preferably one yellow and one red)  
2-3 tomatoes  
1 onion  
vegetable oil  
salt  
pepper  
lemon juice (enough to drizzle over salmon)  
flour (enough to coat salmon)

### Method

1. Chop carrot, peppers, tomatoes, and onion into small pieces in the shape and size according to your wish.
2. Put the chopped vegetables into a hot pan with some vegetable oil. Let vegetables cook for about 10 minutes until they are half-done.
3. While vegetables are cooking, sprinkle salmon with salt, pepper, and lemon juice.
3. Remove vegetables from the pan and add some more oil to the pan.
4. Roll the salmon pieces in flour and place them in the oil. Fry them on one side until lightly browned. Turn over the pieces of salmon and place the half-cooked vegetables on top of the salmon.
5. Cover the pan and let the fish and vegetables stew together for 10-15 minutes (Fig 3).
6. The meal is ready and fine when served with boiled rice.



Fig. 3. Salmon with stewed vegetables just prior to serving.

*Bon appétit!*