

# Pan-fried mackerel fillets, hot pickled slaw and fried capers

This is my son Jack's recipe. He explains it's an Asian version of escabeche, the Mediterranean way of cooking oily fish like mackerel or sardines with vinegar to both preserve them and cut the oily richness. Here the flavours of dashi and star anise predominate. Use a non-stick pan to fry the mackerel as the skin is thin.

*Alternative fish: herring, horse mackerel, sardines*

**Serves 2 as a first course**

4 mackerel fillets

Salt

75ml rice wine vinegar or white wine  
vinegar

50ml water

½ tsp dashi granules

Vegetable oil

1 tsp capers

A few sprigs of chervil or parsley

10g butter

## **For the slaw**

50g carrot, finely sliced into rounds

25g shallot, finely sliced into rounds<sup>2</sup>

juniper berries

2 black peppercorns

1 star anise

A sprig of thyme

A small pinch of crushed dried chilli flakes  
(about ¼ tsp)

Sprinkle the flesh side of the mackerel with ½ teaspoon of salt and leave for 5 minutes.

Combine the vinegar, water and dashi granules in a bowl.

Wash the salt off the mackerel and lay them on a plate, skin-side up. Pour over the pickling liquid so that it covers the flesh side but does not completely submerge the fillets. Leave to pickle for 10 minutes, then remove and pat dry, reserving the liquid.

Heat a tablespoon of vegetable oil in a frying pan and fry the capers until crispy.

For the slaw, put the carrot and shallot in a pan with the juniper berries, peppercorns, star anise, thyme, chilli and a good pinch of salt. Pour the reserved pickling liquid over the slaw, bring to the boil, take off the heat and leave to cool.

Heat a frying pan and brush with a thin film of oil. Fry the mackerel fillets skin-side down over a moderate heat for 1½-2 minutes. Assemble the mackerel on a serving dish with the warm pickled vegetables and all the spices. Sprinkle with the capers and the chervil or parsley. Deglaze the frying pan with the pickling liquor, add the butter, reduce briefly, and spoon around the edge.