



A Seat at the Table

A JOURNEY INTO JEWISH FOOD

RECIPE COURTESY OF

The GEFILTERIA

Excerpted from the book THE GEFILTE
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HERBED GEFILTE FISH

JEFFREY: At its most basic, gefilte is a cold fish appetizer served before Ashkenazi holiday and Sabbath meals, and is made by mixing freshwater fish with eggs, onions, and spices. One of the things that drew us to gefilte fish was that it stood as a symbol of resourcefulness—how far a single fish could be stretched to feed an entire family. It had a practical aspect, too. On the Sabbath, Jews are prohibited from separating bones from flesh, so by finely grinding the fish, the proscription was circumvented. We love thinking of ways to restore gefilte to its rightful place on the table, especially for the Passover seder, when gefilte is often front and center. This recipe has a classic base,

but we've added herbs to give it a taste of spring and a touch of color. There is also no matzo meal or bread crumbs in this recipe, giving it a lighter texture and removing any gluten. You have two options for how to cook and serve your gefilte fish. Poaching quenelles in a fish broth is a classic method used by generations of Jewish cooks, and baking the fish in a terrine is a quick and contemporary approach that will slice and plate beautifully. Liz and I both prefer the baked terrine, but enough friends and family members request the poached option that we couldn't ignore the pull of tradition. The first stage of the process for this gefilte fish is nearly identical to the Smoked Whitefish Gefilte Terrine (page 172) and the Old World Stuffed Gefilte Fish (page 169) (until it gets stuffed into the skin).

NOTE: The whitefish we use here refers to the species *COREGONUS CLUPEAFORMIS* from the Great Lakes. If you can't find whitefish, substitute any one of the following: hake, sole, flounder, whiting, tilapia, or halibut.

BAKED TERRINE

► **MAKES 1 SMALL TERRINE; SERVES 8 TO 10**

1 small onion, coarsely chopped
12 ounces whitefish fillet, skin removed,
flesh coarsely chopped
1¼ tablespoons vegetable or grapeseed oil
1 large egg
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh
watercress (or spinach)

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh dill
1 teaspoon kosher salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
1 tablespoon sugar
Horseradish relish, store-bought or homemade
(page 174 or 176), for serving

1. If there are any bones left in your fillets, remove the larger ones by hand, but don't fret about the smaller ones since they'll be pulverized in the food processor. You can buy your fish preground from a fishmonger (usually a Jewish fishmonger) to ensure all the bones are removed, but try to cook your fish that day since ground fish loses its freshness faster.
 2. Place the onion in the bowl of a large food processor and process until finely ground and mostly liquefied. Add the fish fillets to the food processor along with the rest of the ingredients, except for the horseradish. Pulse in the food processor until the mixture is light-colored and evenly textured throughout. Scoop into a bowl and give it an additional stir to ensure that all the ingredients are evenly distributed throughout.
 3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line an 8 x 3-inch loaf pan with parchment paper and fill the pan with the fish mixture. Smooth out with a spatula.
 4. Place the loaf pan on a baking sheet on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. The terrine is finished when the corners and ends begin to brown. The loaf will give off some liquid. Cool to room temperature before removing from the pan and slicing.
- Serve with horseradish relish.

POACHED GEFILTE QUENELLES

► MAKES 10 2-OUNCE QUENELLES

Heads, bones, and tails from a fish (see **NOTE**)

4 quarts water

1 tablespoon kosher salt

2 onions, coarsely chopped

4 medium carrots

3 tablespoons sugar

Gefilte terrine mixture from Baked Terrine recipe (see steps 1 and 2)

Horseradish relish, store-bought or homemade (page 174 or 176), for serving

1. Place the fish parts, salt, onions, carrots, sugar, and water in a large stockpot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and simmer for at least 45 minutes before poaching the quenelles. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface.
2. Wet your hands and form the gefilte fish mixture into about 10 quenelles the size of an egg, with a similarly oblong shape. They will expand as they cook.
3. Place them one by one into the poaching liquid. When all the servings are in the pot, make sure the heat is on low and cover the pot. Poach for 30 minutes. Remove

the quenelles with a slotted spoon and place them in a bowl or deep serving dish. Spoon enough poaching liquid over to cover the quenelles and let cool slightly before refrigerating. The poaching liquid will gel slightly as it chills.

4. To serve, remove the carrots and cut them into 3-inch-thick rounds. Serve the quenelles chilled, with the carrot pieces and fresh horseradish relish. If you're old-school or adventurous, serve with spoonfuls of the poaching gel alongside.

NOTE: *If poaching, a fishmonger can save the head, bones, and tail for you if he/she sells you the fillet—just ask. The poaching liquid can be made without these fish parts, but the gefilte quenelles will be slightly less flavorful.*