

FOOD & WINE

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best new chefs

recipes
made easy
white wine



RADISHES THREE WAYS
(RECIPE, P. 92)

THE GASTRONAUT FILES

the new sous vide

Food cooked sous vide—simmered in vacuum-sealed plastic bags—becomes incredibly moist and flavorful. And now this chefs' method is coming to home kitchens. F&W tests it out.

I LIKE TO THINK I'M A MODERN WOMAN. FOR YEARS now, I've read the newspaper on my phone. But when it comes to cooking food sous vide, I've been a Luddite.

Ever since George Pralus applied the method to a lobe of foie gras at France's Maison Troisgros in the 1970s, chefs have explored sous vide: They vacuum-seal ingredients in plastic bags, which they simmer at extremely low temperatures in precisely heated water baths. There could not be a more convenient way to cook: Just push a button, drop the plastic bag in the water and walk away.

If I thought about it much, it was the walking-away part I objected to. I like the smells and sounds of old-fashioned cooking. Still, there was little point to pondering: The science-lab equipment sous vide required costs thousands of dollars. But PolyScience, the chefs' brand of

choice, just released an \$800 stripped-down immersion circulator, which regulates water-bath temperatures to within one-tenth of one degree. And a new company's SousVide Supreme is a \$450 "water oven," a metal box that heats water to within one degree. To seal foods in plastic, chefs prefer powerful vacuum packers, but \$75 countertop appliances like Seal-a-Meal work well.

To evaluate the options, I asked three sous vide experts for recipes; then the F&W Test Kitchen tried them with an immersion circulator, a water oven and a pot fitted with a candy thermometer. When Michael Ruhlman's steak emerged superbly moist and exactly medium-rare, I had to concede that sous vide has merit. And cooking the meat to precisely 135°, and knowing we could try it again at 136.2°, seemed like the modern thing to do. —Emily Kaiser



water oven The new SousVide Supreme lacks a water pump but heats water accurately enough to cook most foods perfectly. The company also makes a \$130 countertop vacuum sealer similar to FoodSaver and Seal-a-Meal. \$450; sousvidesupreme.com.

THE GASTRONAUT FILES **sous vide**



RADISHES THREE WAYS

At Forage in Salt Lake City, Viet Pham and Bowman Brown drizzle a bright citrus vinaigrette over fresh, grilled and sweet-firm sous vide radishes.

 **ACTIVE: 15 MIN; TOTAL: 35 MIN**
4 SERVINGS

25-30 assorted radishes, such as French breakfast, watermelon and daikon—quartered or sliced so that all are ½ inch thick (5 cups)

Sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Zest and juice of 2 lemons

Zest and juice of ½ navel orange

1 shallot, finely chopped

1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon rice vinegar


Extra-virgin olive oil

1. Preheat a water bath to 181°. In a medium bowl, season one-third of the radishes with salt and white pepper. Transfer them to a 1-gallon vacuum-pack bag, arranging them in a single layer, and vacuum-seal. Submerge the bag in the water bath and cook at 181° for 20 minutes. Fill a bowl with ice water. Transfer the bag to the ice bath; let cool.
2. Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine the lemon zest and juice with the orange zest and juice, shallot, sugar and vinegar. Whisk in 1 cup of oil; season with salt and white pepper.
3. In a grill pan, heat a thin layer of oil. Add one-third of the radishes and cook over moderately high heat, turning, until browned and just tender, 7 minutes; transfer to plates with the sous vide radishes and remaining fresh radishes, drizzle with the vinaigrette, sprinkle with salt and serve.



SALMON WITH CUCUMBERS

Maria Hines of Tilth in Seattle turns salmon buttery-soft and rare in just 12 minutes. For more-well-done fish, up the water temperature.

 **ACTIVE: 15 MIN; TOTAL: 45 MIN**
4 SERVINGS

2 seedless cucumbers, peeled—
1 sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick,
1 halved, seeded and julienned
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Four 6-ounce, center-cut skinless
salmon fillets, chilled

Freshly ground white pepper

8 ounces plain nonfat Greek yogurt

½ cup coarsely chopped dill

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

1. Preheat a water bath to 122° for rare salmon, 160° for medium. Light a grill or preheat a grill pan. Season the sliced cucumber with salt and black pepper. Grill over high heat, turning once, until lightly charred, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
2. Season the salmon with salt and white pepper; transfer to four 1-quart, vacuum-pack bags and vacuum-seal. Submerge the bags in the water bath and cook at the desired temperature for 12 minutes.
3. In a blender, blend the yogurt with the dill; season with salt and black pepper. In a small bowl, toss the julienned cucumber with the oil and lemon juice; season with salt. Remove the fillets from the bags and transfer to plates. Top with the grilled and julienned cucumber, dollop with the dill sauce and serve.

SERVE WITH Steamed couscous.

WINE Greek white: 2008 Argyros Atlantis.



TRI-TIP WITH CILANTRO BUTTER

Michael Ruhlman, co-author of Thomas Keller's sous vide bible, Under Pressure, likes to drop a Cryovac'd tri-tip straight from the butcher into a water bath.

ACTIVE: 20 MIN; TOTAL: 1 HR 30 MIN
4 SERVINGS

One 2-pound tri-tip sirloin, about
2 inches thick, chilled

2 teaspoons kosher salt

2 teaspoons minced shallot

2 teaspoons lime juice

1 stick salted butter, softened

2 chipotle chiles in adobo—
stemmed, seeded and minced

3 tablespoons chopped
cilantro leaves

Vegetable oil, for cooking

1. Preheat a water bath to 135°. Season the tri-tip steak with the salt. Transfer to a 1-gallon vacuum-pack bag and vacuum-seal. Submerge the bag in the water bath and cook at 135° for 1 hour.
2. In a bowl, mix the shallot with the lime juice; let stand for 10 minutes. Using a handheld mixer, beat in the butter, chipotle and cilantro at low speed until blended.
3. Light a grill or preheat a grill pan. Remove the steak from the water; let stand in the bag for 10 minutes. Remove the steak and pat dry. Brush the grill with oil and grill the steak over high heat, turning once, until browned and crusty, 2 minutes. Transfer the steak to a work surface; let stand for 5 minutes. Thinly slice the meat and transfer to plates. Serve the cilantro butter alongside.

WINE Bold, spicy Zinfandel: 2007 Mazzocco Sonoma County.