

# Pushki Smoked Halibut



Developed by Gayla Pedersen

Produced with support from the  
U.S Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.



Halibut cooked over pushki leaves.  
Photo by Gayla Pedersen.

## MATERIALS:

Shears or a knife  
Grill  
Charcoal  
Lighter or matches  
Salt and pepper  
Fish cage (optional)  
Pushki Leaves  
Halibut

**CAUTION:** As with all wild food introduce pushki slowly. It can cause an allergic reaction for some people. All use of wild plants is done at the user's own risk. The Alutiiq Museum and its partners accept no responsibility for experimentation.

## Step One: Collect Pushki (Cow Parsnip) Leaves

1. Harvest the same day you cook so the leaves aren't too dry. If the leaves are overly dry, they will burn quickly and will not season the fish correctly.
2. Wear gloves and harvest carefully, so the plant does not have contact with bare skin. Skin can develop blisters when exposed to pushki sap.
3. Pick a large plant and find the biggest leaves. Clip each leaf where it connects to the stalk. Bring a bag or basket to carry the leaves.



— *"Pushki smoked halibut is truly wild Gourmet, yet so incredibly easy."* Gayla —

### Step One (continued):

4. Collect enough leaves to cover your fish. If you are using a grill you will need three layers of leaves. If you are cooking over an open fire with a fish cage you need double the amount to wrap the entire filet.
5. At home, rinse the leaves and lay them to dry while you prepare the fish.

### Step Two: Cook with Pushki

1. Get a nice piece of halibut and trim your fish so it is ready to serve from the grill.
2. Start your grill or fire in advance so you have nice coals for cooking.
3. Arrange the fish on the cleaned leaves and season with salt and pepper. Keep the seasonings simple so you can enjoy the true flavor the pushki imparts.
4. Once coals are ready and your fish is on the leaves, you can add other wild greens like beach greens, goosetongue, or seaweed.
5. Place your fish on your heat source and watch to make sure the fire is hot enough to gently burn the leaves to make smoke. Check the fish several times to make sure it is fully cooked.
6. Cooking time will vary depending on the heat of your fire and thickness of your fish. If the fish is thick it will take considerably longer and will allow more smoke to add flavor.
7. When fish is perfectly cooked the meat will "flake" easily and look opaque. If it is undercooked it will not flake and will still have a translucent appearance.

Gayla's preference is to cook the fish over a wood fire in a fish cage at the beach. Wrapping the fish with leaves on both sides imparts more flavor than cooking on the grill. If you prefer a mild smoke, use the grill.