

# Filet of Branzino with Shrimp Kofta, Shiitake Tabbouleh and Preserved Lemon Shorba (Serves 4)

Recipe by Joe Erdely

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## Ingredients

2 (28-32 oz)	whole branzino, head+tail on, scaled and gutted
4 oz, divided	canola oil
Tt, divided	kosher salt
Tt, divided	black Pepper
4 oz	dried shiitake mushroom
.5#	medium ground bulgur wheat, divided
.25 oz	cumin seeds
.25 oz	cinnamon stick
.2 oz	coriander seeds
3 ea	cloves, whole
Tt	nutmeg, grated
4 bu, divided	flat parsley
1 bu	mint leaves, chopped
2 ea	plum tomato, seeded and finely chopped
5 cloves, divided	garlic, peeled and finely grated
2 oz, divided	extra virgin olive oil
4 oz, divided	preserved lemon puree
1#	shrimp (21/25ct) Peeled and deveined, heads+tails removed
1 bu, divided	scallions, thinly sliced whites; 2" sliced greens
2 oz	white sesame seeds, toasted
1 oz	sesame oil
.5 bu	tarragon
6 sprigs	thyme
1" piece	fresh ginger, sliced into thin coins
3 ea	bay leaf

## Method

### Branzino

- 1) Remove fillets from fish and season with salt and pepper. Reserve bones and head.
- 2) Heat a saute pan over Medium-high heat. Add oil and coat bottom of pan. Heat until shimmering.
- 3) Add fillets and press down with back of spatula. Cover and cook about 4 minutes, or until skin is crispy and flesh is opaque and appears almost cooked through.
- 4) Flip filets and continue to cook for thirty seconds. Remove from pan and hold warm

### Shiitake Tabbouleh

- 1) Soak mushrooms in 16 oz cold water overnight. Drain, reserving liquid.
- 2) Soak bulgur in 16 oz hot water. Cover with plastic and allow to sit at room temp for 20 minutes. Uncover and fluff with fork. Set aside.
- 3) In a saute pan, toast spices and grind into powder. Set aside.
- 4) In a food processor, chop soaked mushrooms until finely minced.
- 5) In a bowl, combine mushrooms with 3 bunches parsley, mint, tomatoes, garlic, spice mix, olive oil and preserved lemon
- 6) Season to taste with salt and pepper. Adjust accordingly. Allow to sit as long as possible before serving.

### Shrimp Kofta

- 1) In food processor, combine remaining parsley, scallion whites, remaining garlic, salt and pepper until smooth. Remove into a bowl
- 2) In processor, finely chop shrimp. Combine with remaining bulgur, parsley mixture, sesame seeds and sesame oil until combined.
- 3) Heat canola oil in a saute pan over medium heat until shimmering. Form shrimp into quenelles and sear on all sides until cooked through. Remove and hold warm.

### Lemon Shorba

- 1) In a sauce pan, add branzino bones and cover with reserved mushroom soaking liquid and water to cover. Gently bring to a simmer. Strain and season with lemon puree. Pour into french press prepared with remaining herbs, scallion greens and ginger. Reserve.

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## About Joe Erdely

Joe is currently part of the management team at IFNH Harvest dining facility. An avid home cook from an early age, Joe worked his passion, along with an Associate's degree in culinary arts from his local community college into a modest career spanning over fifteen years and taking him in the kitchens of The Frog and the Peach, Oceana and Momofuku. He's looking forward to working on fun new menu items and shopping for used cookbooks. This is Joe's second Rutgers Culinary Challenge.