

SUMMER STAPLE

Cool avocado recipes for the in-season fruit

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Trey Foshee says his daughters can't wait for summer each year, but not because of school vacation. Instead, his 6- and 10-year-old girls get excited about the summer fruit season — when they can have sliced California avocados and smashed vine-ripened tomatoes on toast for breakfast.

That may not sound like a typical breakfast for most grade-schoolers, but their dad is executive chef and partner in George's at the Cove in La Jolla. And local seasonal produce is a big part of both his family's diet and the menu at George's (which includes the upscale George's California Modern restaurant and casual Ocean Terrace outdoor cafe).

With California avocado season now in full swing — the local crop is harvested March through September — Foshee, an Encinitas resident, is hitting the airwaves on behalf of the California Avocado Commission to promote the locally grown fruit.

A few avocado stats: California produces about 90 percent of the U.S. avocado crop, and a large portion of the state crop comes from San Diego



Dungeness Crab Salad With Avocado, prepared by Trey Foshee, executive chef and partner in George's at the Cove in La Jolla. Courtesy of Trey Foshee



Trey Foshee

County. This year's California avocado crop will be about 470 million pounds (149.6 million from San Diego County). Although California has seven varieties of avocados, 90 percent of the local crop is the black pebbly-skinned Hass variety, according to Stephanie Schaffer,

a spokeswoman for the California Avocado Commission.

Although guacamole fans can find avos in local supermarkets year-round (most supermarkets are now carrying them for 88 cents to \$1 each), the winter crop usually comes from Mexico and Chile. Foshee said he prefers cooking with California-grown avocados for several reasons.

"The California avocados seem fatter and creamier, and they have a richer texture," he said. "Speaking as a consumer, I find that the ones from Mexico have soft spots. It'll feel good in the store and then you open it and peel it and there are big chunks of brown running through it that might be from mishandling during shipping. I don't endorse things very often, but this is something that is a local product, grown in our backyard, and it's something a lot of San Diegans don't realize is important to our economy!"

When he was first asked to create recipes for the Avocado Commission three years ago, Foshee said he pushed himself to think beyond guacamole. Some of his recent creations include a fish taco where the avocado is

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beer-battered and fried (rather than the fish), a lemongrass-avocado soup, a blackened grilled avocado and some avocado desserts (with help from his pastry chef).

Foshee said he likes dishes that pair avocados with seafood and citrus because avocados have a high fat content (about 22.5 mostly healthy fat grams per avocado).

"I tend to like balance in the dishes," he said. "If you're adding a lot of fat in the form of an avocado, the way my brain works is to match it with lean proteins and acids. I think of ceviches and raw fish. It's a natural marriage. A fish doesn't have much fat, and you're adding it to a healthy fat that adds creaminess and texture. You're adding fat for all the right reasons."

These recipes were provided by Trey Foshee, executive chef and partner at George's at the Cove in La Jolla for the past 11 years.

DUNGENESS CRAB SALAD

12 ounces fresh Dungeness crab

3 hothouse cucumbers
1 red onion
1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
1 tablespoon chives, minced
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 avocado, sliced
1/8 cup petite cilantro

Pick through the crab to make sure there is no shells. Peel the cucumber, cut in half and run on a Japanese mandoline to make julienne strips. Reserve.

Peel and finely mince the onion, rinse under cold water, toss with a touch of olive oil and place in a Cryovac (vacuum sealed) bag. Cryovac the onions and let it sit at least one hour in the refrigerator.

To serve, combine the lime juice and olive oil with 1/4 cup of the minced onions, the mint, cilantro and chives. Place the cucumber in little piles on the plate, top with a fan of California avocado slices and spoon a bit of the onion vinaigrette over the top. Place a small pile of Dungeness crab on top and a few sprigs of petite cilantro. Serves 6.

MARINATED SARDINE CROSTINI

3 very fresh sardines, cleaned



Marinated Sardine Crostini With Tomato Conserva and California Avocado, prepared by Trey Foshee.

Courtesy of Trey Foshee

and filleted
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon fennel seed
1/8 teaspoon chili flakes
1 garlic clove, sliced thin
2 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 leaves of basil, diced
6 slices baguette
1/2 California avocado, sliced

Pour lemon juice in shallow ceramic container and lay the sardines in, skin side up. Let sit for 45 minutes to one hour. Lightly toast fennel seed. Combine olive oil, fennel seed, chili flakes and garlic clove in a shallow ceramic baking pan. Remove the sardines from the juice and marinate

them in the olive oil mixture overnight.

Cut the tomatoes in quarters and pass through a food mill to remove the seeds and peel. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Pour tomato puree in a non-corrosive baking pan so it's about 1/2-inch thick. Place in oven and cook until the mixture dries out and becomes thick, stirring every 30 minutes or so to prevent scorching. Remove from the oven; let stand to room temperature, then refrigerate. When ready to serve, mix in the 2 tablespoons olive oil and the basil and season with salt and pepper. Leftovers will keep at least 1 week refrigerated.

To build: Brush the baguette slices with olive oil and either grill or bake until

light brown. Top with a smear of the tomato conserva, place a sardine half on top and top with slices of California avocado. Serves 6.

HALIBUT CEVICHE

12 ounces fresh Alaskan halibut fillet, diced
 1 1/2 cups fresh-squeezed lime juice
 1 tablespoon salt
 1/4 cup lime juice
 1/4 cup tangerine juice
 Salt and white pepper, to taste
 1/2 cup avocado, peeled, seeded and diced
 1/2 cup tangerine segments
 2 jalapenos, seeds and ribs removed, cut in fine julienne strips
 1/2 red bell pepper, seeds and ribs removed, cut in fine julienne strips
 1/8 cup petite cilantro or cilantro leaves

2 tablespoons cardamom oil
 (to make, blend 2 tablespoons black cardamom with 1/8 cup grapeseed oil)

Place halibut pieces, lime juice and season with salt in a plastic or ceramic bowl. Place in refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours, or until halibut is white and firm. Remove halibut from lime juice; discard lime juice. Place halibut in a bowl. Combine lime and tangerine juice; season with salt and white pepper. Add enough juice to the halibut to moisten it to your liking. Add the avocado, the tangerine segments, the jalapeno and red peppers and mix well. Place in a chilled bowl with some of the juice, top with cilantro and drizzle with cardamom oil. Serves 4.