



# Sally's Galley

By Sally Oulton\*

## Tuna Carpaccio, Sally Style!

**I** love tuna. I love fresh tuna. Not the canned variety. Fresh tuna caught straight off the back of the boat. I have to confess it is the one fish I have had the fortunate pleasure of catching a few times over the years while at sea.

Off the coast of Costa Rica, throughout the Mediterranean, in the Bay of Biscay, down the Red Sea and off our very own shores.

The most exciting and memorable time catching tuna was right here in Australia while working on a game fishing boat. I had never seen schools of Yellowfin tuna like I saw off the coastal shelf along the Ribbon Reefs offshore from Cairns and Cooktown. They chased our lures like a pack of wolves and as we played a game of cat and mouse with them, the more we caught, the bigger they got. It was unbelievable.

I love the whole waiting game, the hook up and the challenge of keeping that fighting fish on the hook. But most of all, I love eating it.

Tuna is a wonderful, tasty meaty fish. They are a part of the mackerel family and when fresh it is protein-packed, oil-rich, offers great taste and has excellent nourishment qualities. It is also a fabulous fish for those who profess to prefer meat, and is ideal for those who don't like to fiddle with bones.

Due to its firm, meaty texture, it really fulfils and is a wonderful way to introduce a non-fish eater into becoming one. I remember clearly changing the mind of a non-fish eating man into a tuna consumer. Mind you, I did trick him.

We were traveling down the Red Sea on our way down to the Maldives from Spain. We had been



*That BIG grin says it all, doesn't it? There is nothing quite so exciting as a double hook-up on 'fin - just ask Sally!*



Oh boy! Folks, you should know this is one of the Editor's all-time favourites, so do yourself (and the family) a favour, and try this recipe next time you can score some FRESH yellowfin or bluefin - ideally best caught yourself, or even better, caught by the young 'uns - they'll never forget the fishing - or the meal afterwards.





catching tuna every day since we left the Suez Canal behind, and as a result, I had to come up with creative ways on how to serve tuna. That day, burgers came to mind. The non-fish eater thought he was being served a hamburger and after he walloped it down, he stated 'Gee, that was nice, but what type of meat was it?'

I will introduce you to those delicious burgers in another issue when the mangoes come in season.

But firstly, let me tell you some of the varieties of tuna that we find on our shores and the types that are best for this month's recipe - Tuna Carpaccio, Sally style. (Carpaccio is a dish of slice raw meat or fish sliced paper-thin and served as an appetizer. I enjoy serving it seared and a little thicker than paper-thin as a salad for lunch.)

In Australian waters you will find albacore, big-eye tuna, longtail tuna also known as northern bluefin tuna, mackerel tuna also known as bonito, skipjack or striped tuna and my favourite species which are of highest quality, the southern bluefin and yellowfin.

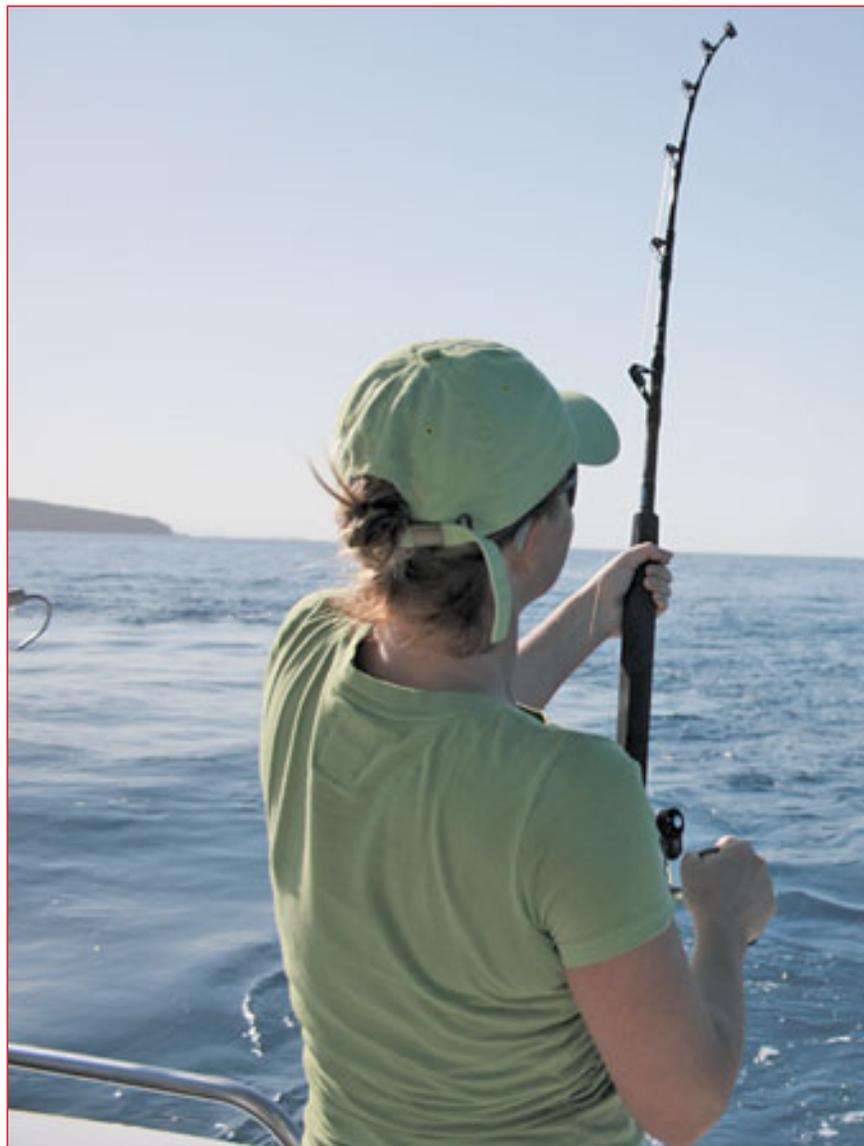
Tuna can vary in colour and flavour with flesh ranging from light to dark. The flavour of the albacore is the mildest, and is often referred to as 'the chicken of the sea' due to its white flesh when cooked.

The skipjack is the strongest flavour, hence the reason why this type of tuna is usually canned. The reason for tuna's rich, deep red colour instead of white flesh is due to the muscle tissue having a higher oxygen storage capacity than other types of fish.

Bluefin tuna is the best fish for carpaccio. It has a bit more fat with more flavour than the other varieties, and when it matures, it has similar appearance to raw beef. Unfortunately, most of the bluefin fished in our waters is exported to Japan at premium prices for their delicacy sashimi.

In saying that, southern bluefin can be caught off South Australia from December to March and off Tasmania from April to June. In NSW, you can catch bluefin from May to September.

If you are fortunate to catch a bluefin or yellowfin for this recipe, make sure you stun the fish and bleed it straight away. It is best for





the quality of the flesh. If you are buying the fish, check that the steaks look fresh and moist. If they are dull and dry, forget them. I prefer to buy tuna steaks frozen that are individually vacuumed packed; then I can thaw the number I need.

The last time I caught a tuna was while out fishing off Hamilton Island on board the charter boat 'Renegade'. It is a \$600,000 Stebercraft Sport Fisher 3800 boasting twin 355 Cummins diesels and had \$20,000 worth of Shimano fishing tackle and equipment on hand. The crew consisted of Captain Jayson and deckhand Chad, two chaps aged in their thirties.

Their job is to take people fishing everyday, and as a result they knew exactly where to take us to catch some dinner.

We sped out to the outer islands to do a spot of bottom fishing. After several GT's and nannagai hooked and the guests satisfied, Jayson spotted the flicker of a school of tuna off in the distance. The hand fishing lines all came up instantly, and we steamed out for the chase.

Chad then put out the reels and as we motored in through the school, the scream of not one reel, but two reels set off. I quickly grabbed one

### Sally's Traditions & Superstitions

*Did you know . .*

**A naked woman on board will calm the sea? This is the reason for naked figureheads . .**

rod while my friend Blake grabbed the other.

And as I began reeling it in, one of the other guests sitting up in the flybridge yelled "Hey, she's done this before!"

After what seemed forever, and with that lovely ache in my biceps, I had caught dinner. And with that, I am going to introduce you to Tuna Carpaccio, Sally style.

I believe the best way to eat bluefin and yellowfin tuna is seared and left rare in the centre and then sliced into carpaccio.

### Tuna Carpaccio – Sally Style

If you have caught your tuna, cut it into large batons sliced off the back bone and refrigerate. If you have bought steaks, allocate a steak per person.

Mix in a blender or a coffee grinder:

- 1 cup black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup coriander
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1/4 olive oil.

Coat the batons or steaks generously with the blended mix of herbs and spices and refrigerate for 1/2 hour or put into cold esky.

Heat a hot plate or grill. Fry each side for 20 seconds. Put back on plate or pan and let it rest in the fridge or esky for an hour before slicing finely.

Slice across the grains and arrange tuna around the plate leaving the centre free. In the middle of the plate, serve with either some steamed green beans and diced tomatoes or an Asian salad of shredded onion, cucumber, mint leaves and fresh coriander. Drizzle the tuna and salad with a soy/mirin dressing.

### Soy/Mirin Dressing:

- 1/2 cup mirin
- 1/2 cup soy
- 3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar

Mirin is a Japanese rice wine. It is a sweet, low-alcohol wine made from glutinous rice and adds flavour and sweetness. It can be found in the supermarket in the Asian section or in Asian food shops. If you don't have mirin on hand, you can substitute it with a tablespoon of dry sherry with 1/2 teaspoon of sugar.

*Bon Appetit!*

### F&B

*\*Editor's Note: 37 yr old Sally Oulton was born in Perth, did a stint in NZ for five years, before settling in Dubbo, NSW where she grew up with her family. Leaving Oz in 1994, she travelled to Europe, did the secretarial thing for three years - and then changed course to study cooking in 1997. After her first cooking assignment (in the '97 Admiral's Cup) she spent the next ten years at sea - all over the world - in an extraordinary career that has so far embraced 60,000 miles at sea in everything from crack ocean racing yachts in Europe and South America, 'white yachts' in the Med, Caribbean and the Whitsundays - to Oz game boats off the Ribbons. Now back home, with her partner and a 19' Haines, they plan to explore the GBR via trailerboat.*