

# How the Family Behind Heath Ceramics Fishes — and Cooks — Summer Salmon

For Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravac, road trips to Alaska represent a way to disconnect from their lives — and stock up on seafood for the year.



Heath Ceramics co-owners Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravac at home in Sausalito, California. Alanna Hale

*In “[One Good Meal](#),” we ask cooking-inclined creative people to share the story behind a favorite dish they actually make and eat at home on a regular basis — and not just when they’re trying to impress.*

Every summer, Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravac pause their roles as co-owners of the iconic Bay Area-based pottery and home goods store [Heath Ceramics](#) and drive up the coast from their home in Sausalito to the end of civilization. They load their teenage son, Jasper, into a customized gray-on-gray Sportsmobile camper van — a ruggedly luxurious vehicle that looks like something Mad Max would drive to Pottery Barn — and together they proceed through the Pacific Northwest to British Columbia, usually continuing up to Alaska. “It’s actually really hard work to get away from people,” Petravac says. “We’re looking for places that are still wild.”

Petravac, 50, and Bailey, 52, spend their days playing cards; foraging for berries (to use in crumbles and crisps); seeking out lemony, new-growth spruce tips (to infuse their olive oil); and fishing for king salmon. They’ll wind up with a freezer full of it, a bounty they ship back to California. “We do cook salmon up there and have figured some stuff out,” Bailey says. “But it’s a little different being able to refine it in your home.”



The fillets here come from a 34-inch, 22-pound king salmon caught in Alaska by the owners' son, Jasper. The bright-green buds at bottom are foraged spruce tips.  
Alanna Hale

If you know the Heath aesthetic — smooth shapes, surprising splashes of color — you can imagine the couple's home. A high-ceilinged Victorian farmhouse overlooking the bay, it's decked out in glazed ceramic tiles and stocked with the elemental Heath dinnerware that has helped define California design since the company's founding in 1948 by the couple Brian and Edith Heath. Bailey and Petravic took it over in 2003, and they're currently at work refreshing Heath's ongoing collaboration with [Alice Waters's](#) stalwart vegetable-focused restaurant Chez Panisse, adding a batch of new colors (to be released in February) to its plates and bowls.

The recipe below came from their own kitchen, and was prepared on a vintage copper stove where Petravic likes to tinker with dishes, including this salmon, a dinner-party favorite. "A lot of times you'll still be experimenting," Bailey tells him, "and I'm like 'Wait, but it was perfect.'"

"Yeah," he says, "but it could get better."



The Heath owners serve on one of their own plates, from the Alabama Chanin line, with a glass of Belden Barns rosé. Alanna Hale

### **Catherine and Robin's Pan Roasted Salmon with Braised Greens and Beans**

#### *For the salmon*

- Two six-ounce wild-caught salmon fillets
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup corn meal for dredging
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (preferably infused with spruce)
- Coarse sea salt (preferably Alaska Pure brand smoked sea salt)
- Lemon and bread crumbs for serving

#### *For the greens and beans*

- Two bunches of kale, de-stemmed and coarsely chopped
- 2 large shallots, halved and thinly sliced
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon yuzu vinegar (or apple cider vinegar) for braising
- 1 can white beans (black-eyed peas or great northern)
- Sea salt to taste
- 1 turnip, thinly sliced
- Black and white sesame seeds

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Rub both sides of the fish with oil and salt, then dip both sides in cornmeal. In a heavy ovenproof pan, preferably cast iron, add oil and heat over a medium flame. Place the salmon fillets skin side down (ideally with a heavy cast-iron pan pressed on top to crisp up the skin) for 3 minutes. Flip the fillets and weight the other side. Immediately transfer to the oven and finish for about 4 minutes or until cooked through.

2. Coat a pan with oil and warm to medium-high. Sauté shallots with the thyme sprigs until they begin to brown. Add kale, stirring until wilted. Add beans along with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water and the vinegar. Reduce heat and cook, adding water as needed to keep moist, until leaves are softened but still firm and bright. Remove greens to a bowl and let cool. Finish with sea salt and more vinegar to taste.

3. Serve fish on a large plate with a squeeze of lemon juice and a brush of oil. Serve greens on the side, topped with sliced turnip and sesame seeds.