

‘Ota Ika’ Ceviche

with coconut black sesame wafers

Sounds like the lyrics of an island song, but this is the name of the Tongan version of ceviche. Known in Fiji as kokoda, Hawaii as poke and ceviche in South America, ota ika is a light, quick and easy dish. Use the freshest local fish you can. Our Tongan host, John Ross, spear-caught a parrotfish—beautiful and delicious! Fresh fish paired with the aroma of fresh coconut and vanilla makes this an ideal summer dish. Serve with a local amber beer (Ikale is the local Tongan beer) or chilled crisp white wine. I enjoy ota ika with a glass of Prosecco—a bit of fizz pairs beautifully with the fragrance of vanilla.

GF OPTION SERVES 4			
fresh opakapaka, snapper, sea bass or other firm white fish	2 fillets	110 g	4 oz
red capsicum/red bell pepper, chopped	⅓ cup	55 g	2 oz
red onion, chopped	¼ cup	20 g	¾ oz
green mango or green papaya, cut into 1¼-in/3-cm pieces	⅓ cup	55 g	2 oz
fresh or canned coconut cream	⅓ fl cup	80 ml	2½ fl oz
vanilla paste	½ tsp		
lime juice, plus zest of 1 lime	¼ fl cup	60 ml	2 fl oz
sweet chili sauce	1 Tbsp	15 ml	½ fl oz
hot sauce, to taste	4 dashes		
kiwifruit, peeled, cut into 1¼-in/3-cm pieces	½	30 g	1 oz
Asian/nashi pear or jicama, cut into small cubes	½ cup	60 g	2 oz
parsley, minced	1 Tbsp		
COCONUT BLACK SESAME WAFERS			
shredded coconut, unsweetened	¾ cup	65 g	2¼ oz
black sesame seeds	2 tsp		
vanilla sugar (page 222)	2 Tbsp	30 g	1 oz
plain or gluten-free flour	⅓ cup	50 g	1¾ oz
egg, large	1		
egg whites	2	60 ml	2 fl oz
1 lime and ½ orange zested	4 tsp		
butter or coconut oil, melted and cooled	2 Tbsp	30 ml	1 fl oz
TO SERVE			
green/spring onions or chives for garnish, chopped	1 Tbsp	20 g	¾ oz

Cut the boned raw fish fillets into 2½-in/6-cm pieces and place in a non-reactive metal or glass bowl. Add the capsicum, onion, mango, half the coconut cream, vanilla paste, lime juice and zest, sweet chili sauce and hot sauce. Gently fold together, cover and chill for 1 hour.

Just before serving, fold in the kiwifruit, Asian pear, parsley and remaining coconut cream. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste and gently combine. Chill for up to 30 minutes if wished.

Coconut black sesame wafers

In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the coconut, sesame seeds, sugar, flour and large pinch of sea salt. Add egg, egg whites, zests and butter or coconut oil. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 325°F/175°C (300°F/150°C fan).

Spread batter in a thin, even layer as teardrops or circles on lightly oiled baking paper or mat on a baking tray.

Bake until golden brown, turning tray halfway through and checking often to keep from burning; about 10 minutes. Lower oven temperature if needed. Carefully lift wafers from tray to cooling racks. If you want sharper edges to the wafers, transfer from the tray to a cutting board and use a cookie cutter to cut out desired shapes, then use a palette knife or small spatula to transfer to cooling racks. If needed, return to oven for a few minutes to soften and reshape.

When cooled, store in an airtight container.

To serve

Spoon the ceviche into 4 coconut shells or martini glasses, sprinkle with green onions or chives, and garnish with a coconut black sesame wafer. Serve immediately. *NM*

