

Chile-Crusted Black Sea Bass  
"A Fish Called Dinner," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 18, 2012  
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Adapted by Sam Sifton

Yield: 4 servings  
Time: 45 Minutes

## INGREDIENTS

2 whole black sea bass, approximately 2 pounds each, gutted, scaled and trimmed of fins and gills  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup gochujang (fermented chile-and-soybean paste, available in many Asian markets and online)  
10 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only, finely minced  
6 cloves garlic, peeled and minced  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup heavy cream (or substitute whole milk)  
4 tablespoons neutral oil (like canola)  
1½ teaspoons red-wine vinegar  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 375. Remove fish from refrigerator, and allow it to come to room temperature. In a medium-size bowl, combine gochujang, thyme, garlic and cream, then whisk into smooth paste.
2. Dry fish carefully with paper towel. Place them dorsal-side up in a dry, oven-safe sauté pan or roasting pan, pulling apart the collarbones to create "wings" that will stabilize them in an upright position. Slather the skin of both fish with about half of the chile-paste mixture. Add approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water to the pan, and place carefully in the oven. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes, watching carefully to make sure that the exterior does not burn. (If it starts to, cover the fish gently with a sheet of aluminum foil.) Use the tip of a small, sharp knife to check for doneness; remove from oven when the flesh is almost but not quite fully opaque. Allow fish to rest for about 2 to 4 minutes, at which point it will be done.
3. Meanwhile, make sauce. Add the oil and the vinegar to the remaining chile paste, and whisk to combine. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
4. Using a flexible metal spatula, gently remove the four fillets from the two fish. Serve skin-side up, with sauce on the side, along with white rice and sauteed kale.