

Prep Time	10 minutes
Cook Time	15–18 minutes
Total Time	25–28 minutes
Skill Level	Easy
Servings	4
Method	Oven baking (sheet pan)
Cuisine	Seafood / Mediterranean-inspired

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Why You'll Love This Recipe

Lemon Garlic Butter Baked Fish is the answer to the eternal weeknight question: “What’s for dinner?” It’s fast, foolproof, and packed with flavor thanks to a simple compound butter made from melted butter, fresh garlic, lemon zest, lemon juice, and parsley. The fish bakes in a hot

oven until it's flaky and tender, while the butter sauce pools around it to spoon over rice, couscous, or crusty bread. Cleanup is minimal—just one sheet pan lined with parchment—and the whole dish comes together in well under half an hour.

Ingredients

For the fish:

- 4 white fish fillets (about 6 oz / 170 g each), such as cod, tilapia, haddock, or halibut — about 1½ lbs / 680 g total
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (for brushing the pan and fish)

For the lemon garlic butter:

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 4 garlic cloves, finely minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest (from 1 lemon)

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped (plus extra for garnish)
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)

Optional garnish:

- Lemon slices
 - Extra chopped parsley
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Equipment

- Rimmed baking sheet
- Parchment paper or aluminum foil
- Small saucepan or microwave-safe bowl
- Pastry brush

- Instant-read thermometer (recommended for accuracy)
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Instructions

Step 1 — Preheat and Prepare (Intensity: Low)

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 400°F (200°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and brush it lightly with 1 tablespoon of olive oil to prevent sticking. Allow the oven to fully come to temperature—about 10–15 minutes—so the fish cooks evenly and develops a slight golden edge.

Step 2 — Make the Lemon Garlic Butter (Intensity: Low)

In a small saucepan over low heat, melt the 6 tablespoons of butter gently—do not let it brown or boil. Remove from heat and stir in the minced garlic, lemon zest, lemon juice, chopped parsley, and red pepper flakes (if using). Stir for 30 seconds so the garlic infuses the warm butter without cooking bitter. Set aside. (Alternatively, melt the butter in a microwave-safe bowl in 20-second bursts on HIGH, then stir in the aromatics.)

Step 3 — Season the Fish (Intensity: Low)

Pat the fish fillets completely dry with paper towels—this is key for a good texture and prevents excess moisture in the pan. Arrange them on the prepared baking sheet, leaving a little space between each fillet. Brush each fillet with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil, then season evenly with the salt and black pepper on both sides.

Step 4 — Apply the Butter Sauce (Intensity: Low)

Spoon or brush about two-thirds of the lemon garlic butter generously over each fillet, coating the tops evenly. Reserve the remaining one-third of the butter sauce for serving. If

desired, lay 2-3 thin lemon slices on top of each fillet.

Step 5 — Bake (Intensity: Medium)

Bake on the center rack for 15-18 minutes, depending on thickness:

- Thin fillets ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch / 1 cm): 12-14 minutes
- Standard fillets (1 inch / 2.5 cm): 15-18 minutes
- Thick fillets ($1\frac{1}{2}$ inches / 4 cm): 18-22 minutes

The fish is done when it turns opaque and flakes easily with a fork, and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 145°F (63°C). Check at the 12-minute mark to avoid overcooking.

Step 6 — Broil for Golden Edges (Intensity: High, Optional)

For a lightly golden, slightly crisp top, switch the oven to broil on HIGH for the final 60-90 seconds, watching closely so the garlic doesn't burn. This step is optional but adds a lovely finish.

Step 7 — Rest and Serve (Intensity: Low)

Remove the pan from the oven and let the fish rest for 2-3 minutes so juices redistribute. Drizzle the reserved lemon garlic butter over the fillets, garnish with fresh parsley and extra lemon slices, and serve immediately.

Time & Intensity Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Preheat oven	10-15 min	Low
Make butter sauce	2-3 min	Low
Season fish	3 min	Low
Bake	15-18 min	Medium
Broil (optional)	1-1.5 min	High
Rest & serve	2-3 min	Low

Nutrition Information (Per Serving)

Based on 4 servings using cod fillets and calculated with an online nutrition estimator. Values are approximate and will vary by fish type, brand, and portion size.

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Calories	~310 kcal
Total Fat	21 g
— Saturated Fat	11 g
— Trans Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	95 mg
Sodium	480 mg
Total Carbohydrates	1 g
— Dietary Fiber	0 g
— Total Sugars	0 g
Protein	28 g
Vitamin D	~15% DV
Calcium	~4% DV

	Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Iron		~4% DV
Potassium		~10% DV