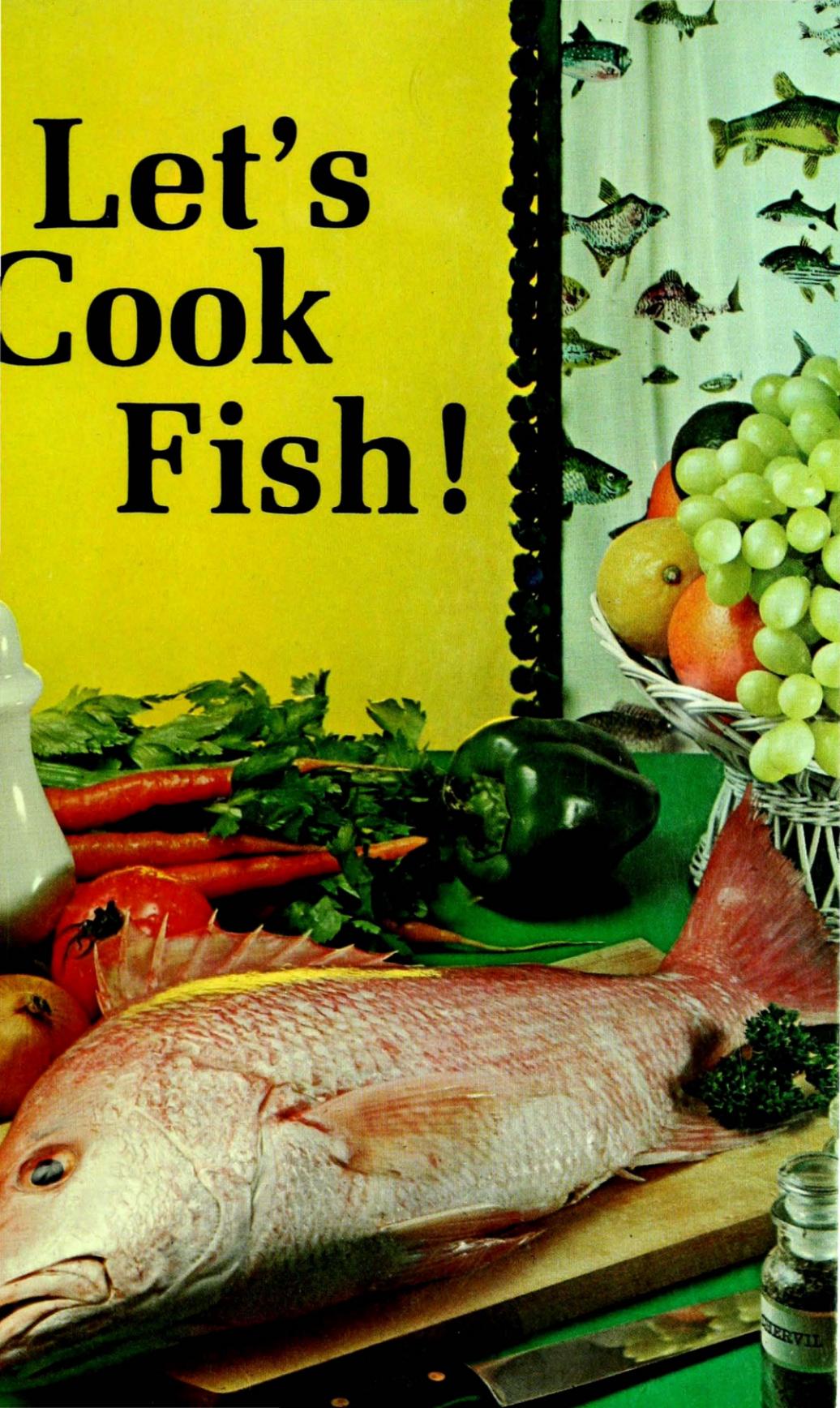


Let's Cook Fish!



The United States Department of the Commerce makes available a voluntary inspection service which permits processors of inspected seafoods to display official USDC grade or inspection shields on their labels. Only those firms that process fishery products under continuous inspection are permitted to use these emblems.



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Let's Cook Fish!

A Complete Guide to Fish Cookery

Fishery Market Development Series No. 8

Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

Washington, D. C. 20240

Look it up . . .

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Introduction

Fish played an important part in the colonization and economy of the early settlers in America. Historians point out that religion was not the only factor in the Pilgrims' search for freedom when they sailed west in the early 1600's. They were seeking economic freedom as well and had heard wonderful tales of the plentiful supply of fish to be found across the ocean. True to their goal, they did fish when they first became established in the New World, and soon salt cod was the most important export item from America.

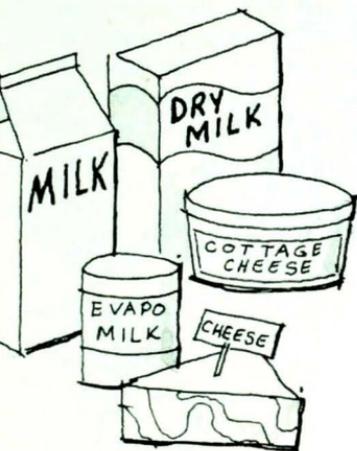
The fish on the market today are a far cry from the salt cod upon which the fishing industry was founded. There are about 240 commercial species of fish and shellfish marketed in the United States today. When you are looking for variety, fishery products give you more choice than any other food group. You can buy fish fresh, frozen, canned, dried, salted, smoked, and in many convenience forms as well.

Fish are one of our most delicious and nutritious foods. Fish are an excellent source of high-quality proteins and also provide minerals and vitamins so necessary for good nutrition.

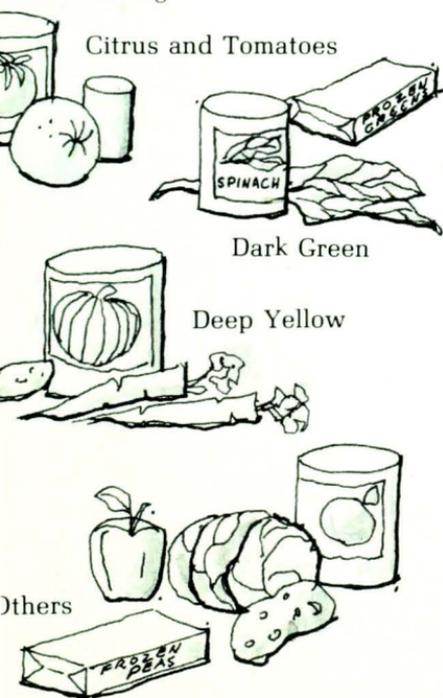
Fishery products can help you balance your food budget since they are among the most economical protein foods you can buy and serve. The preparation of fish is simple and never requires special equipment. You can cook fish in a truly amazing variety of ways. For example, there are baked fish, broiled fish, grilled fish, poached fish, steamed fish, and the ever popular fried fish.

Daily Food Guide

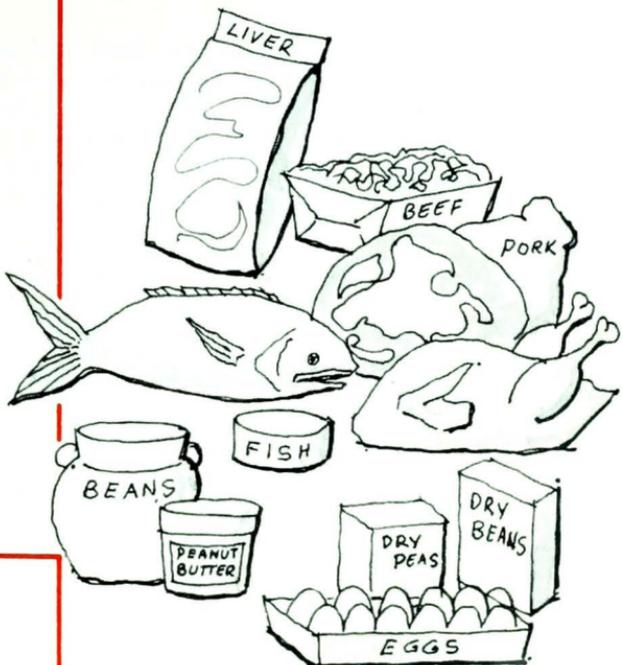
Milk Group
Some for everyone



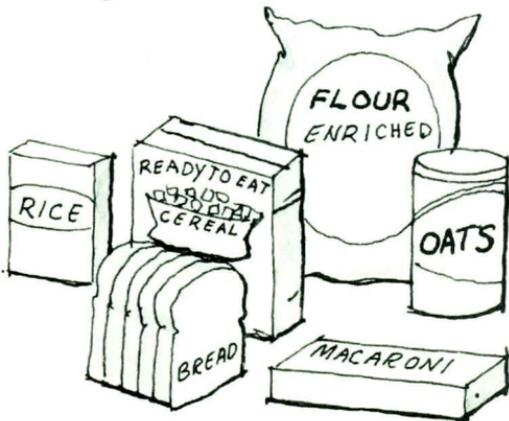
Vegetable-Fruit Group
More servings



Meat Group
2 or more servings



Bread-Cereal Group
4 or more servings
Whole grain or enriched



7

EVERY DAY EAT FOODS FROM EACH GROUP
EAT OTHER FOODS AS NEEDED TO ROUND OUT MEALS



Nutritive Value of Fish

Fish is an important protein food and as such should play an important role in meal planning. Fish are included in the "Daily Food Guide" along with meat, poultry, and cheese. These foods provide high quality protein essential for growth and repair of body tissue.

Proteins

The proteins in our foods are composed of even smaller units known as amino acids. It is through amino acid activity that proteins function. Some amino acids can be synthesized within our bodies from materials in other foods; however, there are other amino acids that our bodies cannot manufacture. These are called essential amino acids and are contained in good quantity in all fish protein. Children need this biologically balanced or complete protein to keep pace with their rapidly developing bodies. Adults need it to maintain health and well-being. Fish protein contains little or no connective tissue and therefore is very easily digested and assimilated by the body. This fact makes it especially valuable in diets for children, older people, and convalescents.

Vitamins

By a fortunate coincidence, protein foods also contain vitamins and minerals. Fishery products contain useful amounts of the B complex vitamins, which include thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂, and pantothenic acid. These are the vitamins valuable in maintaining the health of nerve tissues and for the normal operations of the energy-yielding processes of the body.

Minerals

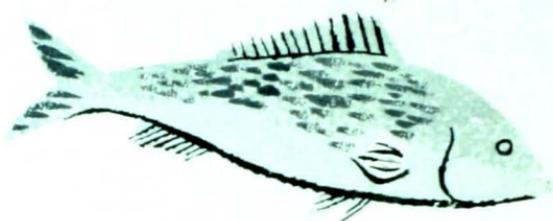
Minerals are essential for certain functions of the body, particularly the maintenance of sound teeth and bones. Fish are a good source of calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus, copper, iodine, manganese, cobalt, and other trace minerals. The flesh of both salt-water and fresh-water fish is quite low in sodium content, making it particularly adaptable for strict, low sodium diets.

Fats

Of interest to weight-watchers is the fact that fish are high in protein but low in calories. The fat content of the different species varies widely — it may be less than 1 percent for fish of the cod family or as much as 20 to 25 percent for salmon or mackerel. When fish are cooked by means other than frying, and served without the addition of rich sauces, they tend to be calorie-shy.

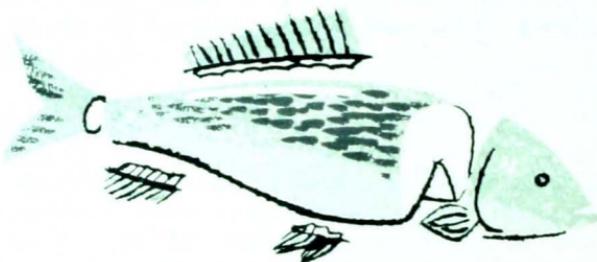
Market Forms of Fresh and Frozen Fish

Fresh and frozen fish are marketed in various forms or cuts. Knowing these forms and their special uses is important in buying fish. The following are the best known market forms:



Whole

Fish as they come from the water. Before cooking, the fish must be scaled and eviscerated — usually the head, tail, and fins are removed. The fish may then be cooked, filleted, or cut into steaks or chunks.

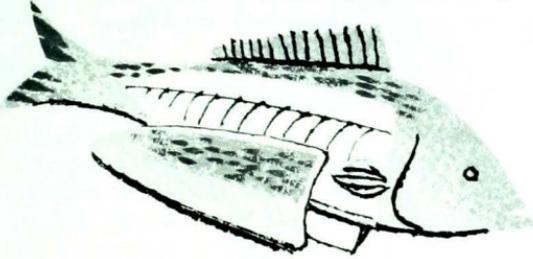


Dressed

Fish with scales and entrails removed, and usually the head, tail, and fins are removed. The fish may then be cooked, filleted, or cut into steaks or chunks. The smaller size fish are called pan-dressed and are ready to cook as purchased.

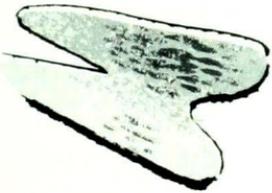
Fillets

Fillets are the sides of the fish cut lengthwise away from the backbone. They are ready to cook as purchased.



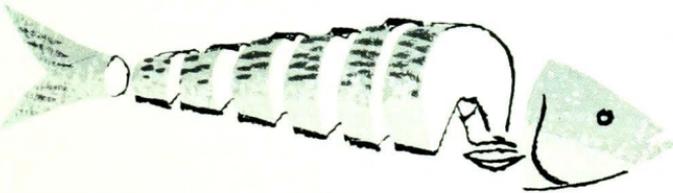
Single fillets

A fillet cut from one side of a fish is called a single fillet. This is the type most generally available on the market. The fillets may or may not be skinless.



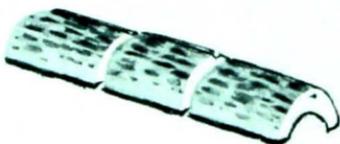
Butterfly fillets

The two sides of the fish cut lengthwise away from the backbone and held together by the uncut flesh and skin of the belly.



Steaks

Steaks are cross section slices from large dressed fish cut $\frac{5}{8}$ to 1 inch thick. A cross section of the backbone is the only bone in a steak. They are ready to cook as purchased.

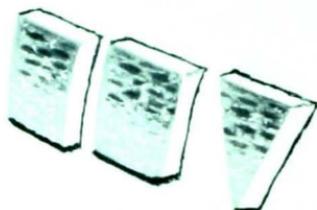


Chunks

Chunks are cross sections of large dressed fish. A cross section of the backbone is the only bone in a chunk. They are ready to cook as purchased.

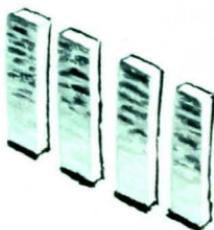
Raw Breaded Fish Portions

Portions are cut from frozen fish blocks, coated with a batter, breaded, packaged, and frozen. Raw breaded fish portions weigh more than 1½ ounces, are at least 3/8 inch thick, and must contain not less than 75 percent fish. They are ready to cook as purchased.



Fried Fish Portions

Portions are cut from frozen fish blocks, coated with a batter, breaded, partially cooked, packaged, and frozen. Fried fish portions weigh more than 1½ ounces, are at least 3/8 inch thick, and must contain not less than 65 percent fish. They are ready to heat and serve as purchased.



Fried Fish Sticks

Sticks are cut from frozen fish blocks, coated with a batter, breaded, partially cooked, packaged, and frozen. Fried fish sticks weigh up to 1½ ounces, are at least 3/8 inch thick, and must contain not less than 60 percent fish. They are ready to heat and serve as purchased.



Buying Fish

How Much to Buy

The amount of fish to buy per serving varies with the recipe to be used, the size of the serving, and the amount of bone in the fish. Count about 3 ounces of cooked, boneless fish as a serving—a little less for small children and a little more for adolescent boys and men.

The following table can help you decide how much fish to buy per serving:

Whole	3/4 pound
Dressed or pan-dressed	1/2 pound
Fillets or steaks	1/3 pound
Portions	1/3 pound
Sticks	1/4 pound
Canned	1/6 pound

Fish may be purchased fresh, frozen, and canned.

Buying Fresh Fish

Most varieties of fresh fish, like many other foods, are more abundant during certain seasons of the year. Your local fish dealer will give you information about seasonal offerings and indicate the varieties that are the most economical. The lesser known species of fish are often as satisfactory as the better known species and are usually more economical. Your dealer will prepare your fish in any market form you desire. Fresh fish may be purchased by the pound in any of the following market forms — whole, dressed, steaks, fillets, and chunks.

Fresh, whole, or dressed fish have the following characteristics:

Flesh: Firm flesh, not separating from the bones, indicates fish are fresh and have been handled carefully.

Odor: Fresh and mild. A fish just taken from the water has practically no "fish" odor. The fishy odor becomes more pronounced with passage of time, but it should not be disagreeably strong when the fish are bought.

Eyes: Bright, clear, and full. The eyes of fresh fish are bright and transparent; as the fish becomes stale, the eyes become cloudy and often turn pink. When fish are fresh, the eyes often protrude; but with increasing staleness, the eyes tend to become sunken.

Gills: Red and free from slime. The color gradually fades with age to a light pink, then gray, and finally brownish or greenish.

Skin: Shiny, with color unfaded. When first taken from the water, most fish have an iridescent appearance. Each species has its characteristic markings and colors which fade and become less pronounced as the fish loses freshness.

Fresh fillets, steaks, and chunks have the following characteristics:

Flesh: Fresh-cut in appearance. It should be firm in texture without traces of browning or drying around the edges.

Odor: Fresh and mild.

Wrapping: If the fillets, steaks, or chunks are wrapped, the wrapping should be of moisture-vapor-proof material. There should be little or no air space between the fish and the wrapping.

Buying Frozen Fish

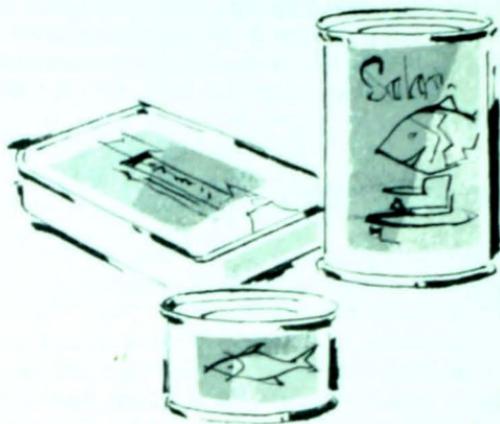
Fishery products that are sold in the frozen form are usually packed during seasons of abundance and held in cold storage until ready for distribution. Thus, the consumer is given the opportunity to select different species of fish throughout the year. High quality frozen fish that are properly processed, packaged, and held at 0° F. or below, will remain in good condition for relatively long periods of time. Frozen fish may be purchased by the pound in any of the following market forms—whole, dressed, steaks, fillets, chunks, portions, and sticks.

Frozen fish of good quality have the following characteristics:

Flesh: Should be solidly frozen when bought. The flesh should have no discoloration or freezer burn. Virtually all deterioration in quality is prevented when fish are properly held in the frozen state. Frozen fish which have been thawed and then re-frozen are poorer in quality.

Odor: Frozen fish should have little or no odor. A strong fish odor means poor quality.

Wrapping: Most frozen fillets, steaks, chunks, portions, and sticks are wrapped either individually or in packages of various weights. The wrapping should be of moisture-vapor-proof material. There should be little or no air space between the fish and the wrapping.



Buying Canned Fish

A wide variety of canned fish and specialty items is available on the market today. The most abundant varieties of canned fish are tuna, salmon, mackerel, and Maine sardines.

Tuna:

Several species of fish are marketed as tuna, all of which are equally desirable to the homemaker. On the Pacific coast, the catch includes albacore, bluefin, skipjack, and yellowfin, whereas albacore, blackfin, bluefin, skipjack, and little tuna are taken on the Atlantic coast. Albacore has lighter meat than the other species and is the only tuna permitted to be labeled as "white meat" tuna. The other species are labeled as "light meat" tuna. Canned tuna is available in three different styles of pack. The pack does not indicate a quality difference but refers to the size of the pieces in the can.

Fancy or solid: The cans usually contain 3 or 4 large pieces packed in oil. This pack is ideal for cold plates or for recipes where appearance is important. It is the most expensive pack.

Chunk: The tuna is cut into convenient sized pieces and packed in oil. It is especially adaptable to salads and other dishes where chunks of tuna are desirable. It is the moderately priced pack.

Flaked or grated: The tuna is cut into smaller pieces than the chunk style and also packed in oil. It is excellent for canapes or sandwiches where tuna is blended into a paste. It is generally lower priced than the preceding packs.

Canned tuna may be purchased in cans that contain $3\frac{1}{4}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, 6, $6\frac{1}{2}$, 7, $9\frac{1}{4}$, $12\frac{1}{2}$, and 13 ounces.

Salmon:

Salmon canned on the Pacific coast are of five distinct species and are usually sold by their names, since they indicate the differences in the type of meat. The differences are a matter of color, texture, and flavor. The higher priced varieties are deeper red in color and have a higher oil content. In descending order according to price, the grades of salmon are red or sockeye salmon; chinook or king salmon; medium red, coho, or silver salmon; pink salmon; and chum or keta salmon. Canned salmon may be purchased in cans that contain $3\frac{3}{4}$, $7\frac{3}{4}$, and 16 ounces.

Mackerel:

May be purchased in 15-ounce cans.

Maine sardines:

May be purchased in cans that contain $3\frac{3}{4}$ or 4 ounces.

Cleaning and Dressing Fish

Most of the fish sold in the markets today are already cleaned, dressed, filleted, or steaked. However, if you have a fisherman in the family and catch your own, or if you are fortunate enough to have friends who give you some of their catches, you will need to know how to clean and dress the fish for cooking.

Follow these steps in cleaning and dressing your fish:



1

Scaling

Wash the fish. Place the fish on a cutting board and with one hand hold the fish firmly by the head. Holding a knife almost vertical, scrape off the scales, starting at the tail and scraping toward the head (fig. 1). Be sure to remove all the scales around the fins and head.



2

Cleaning

With a sharp knife cut the entire length of the belly from the vent to the head. Remove the intestines. Next, cut around the pelvic fins and remove them (fig.2).



3

Removing the Head and Tail

Remove the head and the pectoral fins by cutting just back of the collarbone. If the backbone is large, cut down to it on each side of the fish (fig. 3).



4

Then place the fish on the edge of the cutting board so that the head hangs over and snap the backbone by bending the head down (fig. 4). Cut any remaining flesh that holds the head to the body. Cut off the tail.



5

Removing the Fins

Next remove the dorsal fin, the large fin on the back of the fish, by cutting along each side of the fin (fig. 5). Then give a quick pull forward toward head and remove the fin with the root bones attached (fig. 5). Remove the ventral fin in the same way. Never trim the fins off with shears or a knife because the root bones at the base of the fins will be left in the fish. Wash the fish thoroughly in cold running water. The fish is now dressed or pan-dressed, depending on its size.



6

Cutting Steaks

Large size dressed fish may be cut crosswise into steaks, about an inch thick (fig. 6).



7

Filleting

With a sharp knife cut along the back of the fish from the tail to the head (fig. 7). Then cut down to the backbone just back of the collarbone.



8

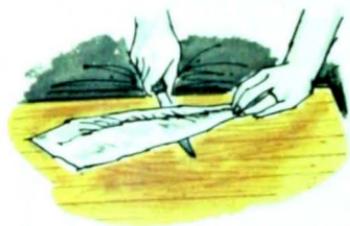
Turn the knife flat and cut the flesh away from the backbone and rib bones (fig. 8).



9

Lift off the whole side of the fish or fillet in one piece (fig. 9). Turn the fish over and cut the fillet from the other side.

Skimming a Fillet



10

If you wish, you may skin the fillets. Place the fillet, skin side down, on a cutting board. Hold the tail end tightly with your fingers and with a sharp knife cut down through the flesh to the skin about 1/2 inch from the end of the fillet. Flatten the knife against the skin and cut the flesh away from the skin by sliding the knife forward while holding the tail end of the skin firmly between your fingers (fig. 10).



Storing and Thawing Fish

21

Fish, like many other food products, are perishable and must be properly handled to avoid spoilage or food poisoning.

Storing

Fresh fishery products should be placed in the refrigerator, in their original wrapper, immediately after they are received. A storage temperature of 35 to 40° F. is needed to maintain the quality of the products. Do not hold fresh fish in the refrigerator longer than a day or two before cooking.

Frozen fishery products should be placed in the freezer, in their original moisture-vapor-proof wrapper, immediately after purchase unless the fish is to be thawed for cooking. A storage temperature of 0° F. or lower is needed to maintain the quality of frozen products. At a temperature above 0° F., chemical changes cause the fish to lose color, flavor, texture, and nutritive value. Freezer storage is a convenient way to keep fish; however, storage time should be limited in order to enjoy the optimum flavor of the frozen fish. It is a good practice to date the packages as they are put in the freezer. Do not hold raw frozen fishery products in the freezer longer than 6 months.

Cooked fishery products should either be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. If they are to be stored in the refrigerator, the cooked fish should be placed in a covered container. Do not hold cooked fishery products in the refrigerator longer than 3 or 4 days. They may also be stored in the freezer if packaged in a moisture-vapor-proof material; however, do not hold cooked fishery products in the freezer longer than 3 months.

Canned fish should be stored in a cool, dry place. Canned fish should not be stored longer than a year.

Thawing

1. Schedule thawing so that the fish will be cooked soon after it is thawed. Do not hold thawed fish longer than a day before cooking.
2. Place the individual packages in the refrigerator to thaw. Allow 24 hours for thawing a 1-pound package.
3. If quicker thawing is necessary, place the individual packages under cold running water to thaw. Allow 1 to 2 hours for thawing a 1-pound package.
4. Do not thaw fish at room temperature or in warm water.
5. Do not refreeze.
6. Fish portions and sticks should not be thawed before cooking.
7. Frozen fillets and steaks may be cooked without thawing if additional cooking time is allowed. Fillets or steaks to be breaded or stuffed should be thawed.



How to Cook Fish

Fish are delicious—if cooked properly. We cook fish to develop their flavor, to soften the small amount of connective tissue present, and to make the protein easier to digest. Cooking fish at too high a temperature or for too long a time toughens them, dries them out, and destroys their fine flavor.

How can you tell when fish are cooked? Raw fish have a watery, translucent look. During the cooking process the watery juices become milky colored, giving the flesh an opaque, whitish tint. This color change is unmistakable. When the flesh has taken on this opaque whitish tint to the center of the thickest part, fish are completely cooked. At this point the flesh will easily separate into flakes, and if there are bones present, the flesh will come away from them readily.

Most cooked fish tend to break up easily, so handle fish as little and as gently as possible during and after cooking to preserve their appearance.



Baking

24

Baking is a form of dry heat cooking and is one of the easiest ways to cook fish. But "bake fish easy" is the most important guide to follow in fish cookery. Fish like a preheated, moderate oven set at 350° F. for a relatively short period of time. This keeps the moistness and flavor in the fish, prevents drying, and keeps the fish tender and palatable. Fish not baked in a sauce or with a topping are basted with melted fat or oil to keep the surface moist.

Can fish be baked from the frozen state? Yes, provided the cooking time is increased to allow for thawing during the baking process and provided the recipe does not call for special handling such as stuffing or rolling.



Baked Stuffed Fish

1 dressed fish
(3 pounds),
fresh or frozen
Salt

Pepper
Bread stuffing
2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Sprinkle inside with salt and pepper. Place fish on a well-greased bake and serve platter, 18 by 13 inches. Stuff fish loosely. Brush fish with fat. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 45 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Bread Stuffing

1/2 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup butter or margarine,
melted
1 quart dry bread cubes

1 egg, beaten
1/2 teaspoon sage
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon thyme
Dash pepper

Cook celery and onion in butter until tender. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Makes 3 cups stuffing.



Broiling

26

Broiling, like baking, is a dry heat method of cookery but in broiling the heat is direct, intense, and comes from only one source. Thin foods tend to dry out under the broiler, so when planning to use this method, choose pan-dressed fish, fillets, or steaks which are about 1 inch thick in preference to thinner ones. If frozen, the fish should be thawed. Baste fish well with melted fat or oil or a basting sauce before placing them under the broiler. Baste again while broiling to keep the fish moist.

Follow the range manufacturer's directions for the operation of the broiler and preheating. The length of time it takes to broil fish depends on the thickness and the distance they are placed from the heat. As a general guide have the surface of the fish about 3 to 4 inches from the source of heat and place thicker cuts farther from the heat than thin ones.

Cooking time will usually range from 10 to 15 minutes to reach the "fish flake easily" stage. As a rule, the fish do not need to be turned because the heat of the pan will cook the underside adequately. Turn the thicker pieces, such as pan-dressed fish, when half the allotted cooking time is up. Baste again with fat or sauce. Always serve broiled fish sizzling hot.



Broiled Fillets or Steaks

2 pounds fish fillets or
steaks, fresh or frozen
2 tablespoons melted fat or
oil

2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
Dash pepper

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place fish in a single layer, skin side down, on a well-greased baking pan, 15 by 10 by 1 inches. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour sauce over fish. Broil about 4 inches from source of heat for 10 to 15 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Baste once during broiling with sauce in pan. Makes 6 servings.

Broiled Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed fish,
fresh or frozen
1/4 cup melted fat or oil
1/4 cup lemon juice

1/2 teaspoons salt
3/4 teaspoon paprika
Dash pepper

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Place fish in a single layer on a well-greased baking pan, 15 by 10 by 1 inches. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Brush fish inside and out with sauce. Broil about 4 inches from source of heat for 5 to 8 minutes. Turn carefully and baste with sauce. Broil 5 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Timetable for Cooking Fish

METHOD OF COOKING	MARKET FORM	AMOUNT FOR 6	COOKING TEMPERATURE	APPROXIMATE COOKING TIME (minutes)
Baking	Dressed	3 pounds	350° F.	45 to 60
	Pan-dressed	3 pounds	350° F.	25 to 30
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	350° F.	20 to 25
	Frozen fried fish portions	12 portions (2½ to 3 ounces each)	400° F.	15 to 20
	Frozen fried fish sticks	24 sticks (¾ to 1¼ ounces each)	400° F.	15 to 20
Broiling	Pan-dressed	3 pounds		10 to 16 (turning once)
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds		10 to 15
	Frozen fried fish portions	12 portions (2½ to 3 ounces each)		10 to 15
	Frozen fried fish sticks	24 sticks (¾ to 1¼ ounces each)		10 to 15
Charcoal Broiling	Pan-dressed	3 pounds	Moderate	10 to 16 (turning once)
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	Moderate	10 to 16 (turning once)
	Frozen fried fish portions	12 portions (2½ to 3 ounces each)	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
	Frozen fried fish sticks	24 sticks (¾ to 1¼ ounces each)	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
Deep-Fat Frying	Pan-dressed	3 pounds	350° F.	3 to 5
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	350° F.	3 to 5
	Frozen raw breaded fish portions	12 portions (2½ to 3 ounces each)	350° F.	3 to 5
Oven-Frying	Pan-dressed	3 pounds	500° F.	15 to 20
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	500° F.	10 to 15
Pan-Frying	Pan-dressed	3 pounds	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
	Frozen raw breaded or frozen fried fish portions	12 portions (2½ to 3 ounces each)	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
	Frozen fried fish sticks	24 sticks (¾ to 1¼ ounces each)	Moderate	8 to 10 (turning once)
Poaching	Fillets or steaks	2 pounds	Simmer	5 to 10
Steaming	Fillets or steaks	1½ pounds	Boil	5 to 10



Charcoal Broiling

30

Charcoal broiling is a dry heat method of cooking over hot coals and in recent years has become a popular form of recreation. Fish, because they cook so quickly, are a natural for this method of cookery.

Pan-dressed fish, fillets, and steaks are all suitable for charcoal broiling. If frozen, the fish should be thawed in advance. Because fish flake easily as their cooking nears completion, use of a well-greased, long-handled, hinged wire grill is recommended.

Since charcoal broiling is a dry heat cooking method, thicker cuts of fish are preferable as they tend to dry out less during the process than thin ones. Also, to ensure serving juicy and flavorful fish, use a sauce that contains some fat and baste them generously before and while cooking.

Fish are usually cooked about 4 inches from moderately hot coals for 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fish.



Barbecued Fillets or Steaks

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2 pounds fish fillets or steaks, fresh or frozen | 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce |
| 1/4 cup chopped onion | 2 tablespoons lemon juice |
| 2 tablespoons chopped green pepper | 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 clove garlic, finely chopped | 1 tablespoon sugar |
| 2 tablespoons melted fat or oil | 2 teaspoons salt |
| | 1/4 teaspoon pepper |

Thaw frozen fish. Cook onion, green pepper, and garlic in fat until tender. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place fish in a single layer in a shallow baking dish. Pour sauce over fish and let stand for 30 minutes, turning once. Remove fish, reserving sauce for basting. Place fish in well-greased, hinged, wire grills. Cook about 4 inches from moderately hot coals for 5 to 8 minutes. Baste with sauce. Turn. Cook for 5 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Frying

Frying is a method of cooking food in fat. For frying, choose a fat that may be heated to a high temperature without danger of smoking. This is necessary because a smoking fat begins to decompose and will give the food an unpleasant flavor. Because they begin smoking at higher temperatures, vegetable oils and fats are preferable to fats of animal origin.

The temperature of the fat is extremely important. Too high heat will brown the outside of the fish before the centers are cooked. Too low heat will give a pale, greasy, fat-soaked product. The most satisfactory frying temperature for fish is 350° F.

Frozen fish must be thawed before frying. Separate the pieces and cut to uniform size.

After frying, drain the fish immediately on absorbent paper to remove excess fat. Keep the fish warm in a low oven until all pieces are cooked, then serve immediately.

Deep-fat frying

32

Deep fat frying is a term applied to cooking in a deep layer of fat. It is a quick method of cooking and is an excellent way to cook tender foods and precooked foods.

For deep-fat frying you need a heavy, deep saucepan or French fryer with straight sides, a fry basket to fit the fryer, a deep-fat frying thermometer, or an electric fryer with automatic temperature control. Use enough fat to float the fish but do not fill the fryer more than half full. You must allow room for the fish and for the bubbling fat.

The fish may be dipped in a liquid and coated with a breading, or dipped in batter. The coating will keep the fish moist during frying and will give them a delicious crispness.

Place only one layer of fish at a time in the fry basket and allow enough room so that the pieces do not touch. This prevents the temperature of the fat from dropping suddenly and assures thorough cooking and even browning. When the fat has heated to the proper temperature, lower the basket into the fryer slowly to prevent excessive bubbling. If the fat is at the right temperature when the fish are added, a crust forms almost immediately, holding in the juices and at the same time preventing the fat from soaking in. Fry until the fish are golden brown and flake easily, usually about 3 to 5 minutes.



Deep-Fat Fried Fish Portions

12 frozen raw breaded fish portions* (2½ to 3 ounces each)

Fat for frying
Tartar sauce

Place frozen fish in a single layer in a fry basket. Fry in deep fat, 350° F., for 3 to 5 minutes or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve with a tartar sauce. Makes 6 servings.

*Often labeled as "fillets" or "steaks".

Deep-Fat Fried Fillets or Steaks

2 pounds fish fillets or steaks, fresh or frozen
¼ cup milk
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon salt

Dash pepper
1½ cups dry bread, cereal, or cracker crumbs
Fat for frying

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Combine milk, egg, salt, and pepper. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place in a single layer in a fry basket. Fry in deep fat, 350° F., for 3 to 5 minutes or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 6 servings.

Note — A commercial breading may be used. Follow the directions on the package.



Pan-frying

34

Pan-frying is a term applied to cooking in a small amount of fat in a fry pan. Of all the ways of cooking fish, pan-frying is probably the most frequently used—and most frequently abused method. When well controlled, it is an excellent way of cooking pan-dressed fish, fillets, and steaks.

The general procedure is to dip the fish in a liquid and then coat them with a breading. Heat about 1/8 inch of fat in the bottom of a heavy fry pan. For pans with a temperature control, the right heat is 350° F. Place one layer of breaded fish in the hot fat, taking care not to overload the pan and thus cool the fat. Fry until brown on one side, then turn and brown the other side. Cooking time will vary with the thickness of the fish. In general, allow about 8 to 10 minutes.



Fried Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed fish,
fresh or frozen
1/4 cup milk
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon salt

Dash pepper
1½ cups dry bread, cereal,
or cracker crumbs
Fat for frying

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Combine milk, egg, salt, and pepper. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a single layer in hot fat, in a 10-inch fry pan. Fry at a moderate heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until brown. Turn carefully. Fry 4 to 5 minutes longer or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 6 servings.

Quick Tartar Sauce

1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad
dressing
1/4 cup drained sweet pickle
relish

Combine ingredients and mix well. Chill. Makes 3/4 cup sauce.



Oven-frying

36

Oven-frying is not actually a true frying method. It is a hot oven method which simulates fried fish. This method of cooking fish was developed by Evelene Spencer, a former Bureau Home Economist, and is sometimes referred to as the Spencer method.

For oven-frying, the fish are cut into serving-size portions, dipped in salted milk, and coated with toasted, fine, dry crumbs. The fish are then placed on a shallow, well-greased baking pan. A little melted fat or oil is poured over the fish, and they are baked in an extremely hot oven (500° F). Nice features of oven-frying are that the fish don't require turning, basting, or careful watching, and the cooking time is short, usually 10 to 15 minutes. The crumb coating and the high temperature prevent the escape of flavorful juices and give an attractive, brown crust.



Oven-Fried Fillets or Steaks

- 2 pounds fish fillets or steaks, fresh or frozen
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups cereal crumbs or toasted dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup melted fat or oil

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Combine milk and salt. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a single layer, skin side down, on a well-greased baking pan, 15 by 10 by 1 inches. Pour fat over fish. Bake in an extremely hot oven, 500° F., for 10 to 15 minutes or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.



Poaching

38

Poaching is a method of cooking in a simmering liquid. In poaching, the fish are placed in a single layer in a shallow, wide pan, such as a large fry pan, and barely covered with liquid. The liquid used in poaching may be lightly salted water, water seasoned with spices and herbs, milk, or a mixture of white wine and water, to name just a few. As with other methods of fish cookery, it is important not to overcook the fish. Simmer the fish in the liquid in a covered pan just until the fish flakes easily, usually 5 to 10 minutes. Because the poaching liquid contains flavorful juices, the liquid is often reduced and thickened to make a sauce for the fish.

Poaching is a favorite method of cooking fish—and with good reason. As an entree, poached fish can be simply served with a sauce or used as the main ingredient of a casserole or other combination dish. Chilled and flaked, poached fish makes a delicious salad.



Poached Fish with Egg Sauce

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 2 pounds fish fillets or
steaks, fresh or frozen | 3 peppercorns |
| 2 cups boiling water | 2 sprigs parsley |
| 1/4 cup lemon juice | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 small onion, thinly sliced | Egg sauce |
| 1 teaspoon salt | Paprika |

Thaw frozen fish. Remove skin and bones from fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place fish in a well-greased 10-inch fry pan. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Carefully remove fish to a hot platter. Pour Egg Sauce over the fish. Sprinkle with paprika. Makes 6 servings.

Egg Sauce

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1/4 cup butter or margarine | Dash pepper |
| 2 tablespoons flour | 1 1/4 cups milk |
| 3/4 teaspoon powdered
mustard | 2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1 tablespoon chopped
parsley |

Melt butter. Stir in flour and seasonings. Add milk gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add eggs and parsley. Heat. Makes 1 1/2 cups sauce.



Steaming

40

Steaming is a method of cooking fish by means of the steam generated from boiling water. When cooked over moisture in a tightly covered pan, the fish retain their natural juices and flavors. A steam cooker is ideal, but any deep pan with a tight cover is satisfactory. If a steaming rack is not available, anything may be used that prevents the fish from touching the water. The water used for steaming may be plain, or seasoned with various spices, herbs, or wine. When the water boils rapidly, the fish are placed on the rack, the pan is covered tightly, and the fish are steamed for 5 to 10 minutes or until they flake easily when tested with a fork. Steamed fish may be served the same as poached fish.



Steamed Fish

*1½ pounds fish fillets,
steaks, or pan-dressed
fish, fresh or frozen*

1 quart boiling water

1½ teaspoons salt

Thaw frozen fish. Place fish in a well-greased steamer insert pan. Sprinkle fish with salt. Cover and cook over boiling water for 5 to 10 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Cool. Remove skin and bones. Makes 2 cups cooked fish.

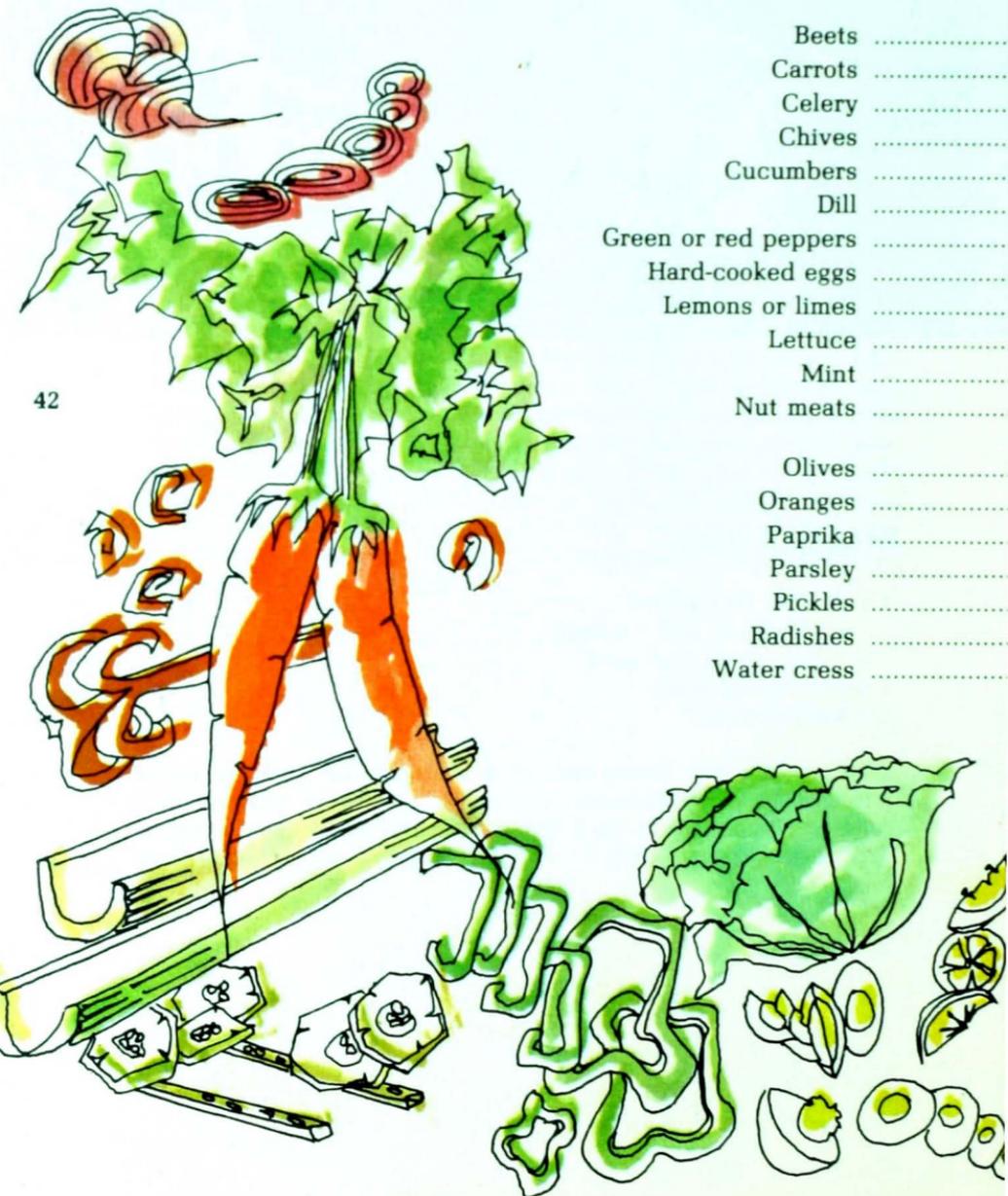
Garnishes for Fish

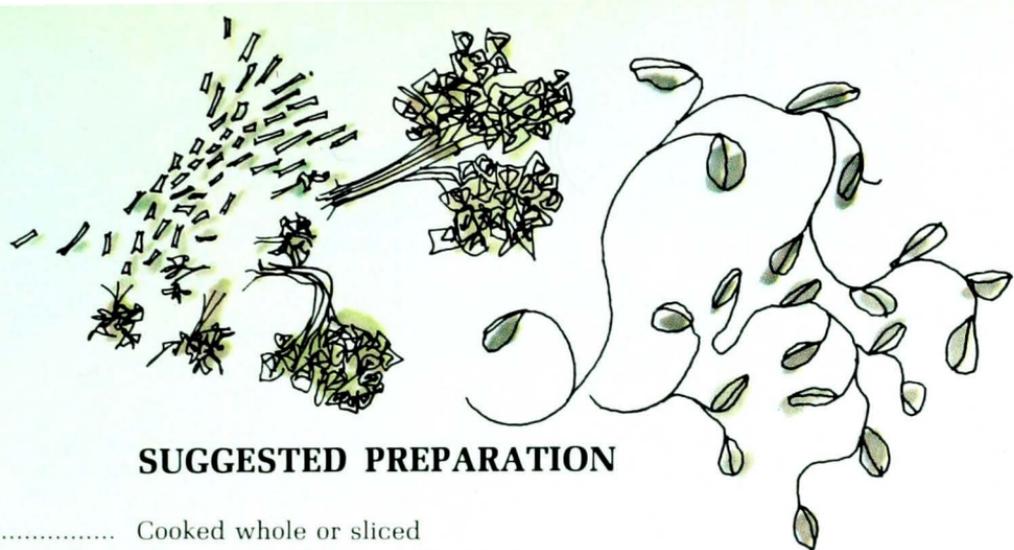
Gay garnishes add life and zest to fish dishes in the same way that smart looking accessories dress up a wardrobe. Let the garnish provide color contrast. Make it pretty but not gaudy. To give a finishing touch to a fish creation, consider one or more of these possibilities:

GARNISHES

- Beets
- Carrots
- Celery
- Chives
- Cucumbers
- Dill
- Green or red peppers
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Lemons or limes
- Lettuce
- Mint
- Nut meats

- Olives
- Oranges
- Paprika
- Parsley
- Pickles
- Radishes
- Water cress





SUGGESTED PREPARATION

- Cooked whole or sliced
- Tops, sticks, curls, or shredded
- Tops, hearts, sticks, or curls
- Chopped
- Slices or sticks
- Sprigs or chopped
- Sticks or rings
- Slices, wedges, deviled, or grated yolks
- Slices, twists, or wedges
- Leaves or shredded
- Sprigs or chopped
- Toasted whole, halved, slivered, or chopped
- Whole, sliced, or chopped
- Slices, twists, or wedges
- Sprinkled sparingly
- Sprigs or chopped
- Whole, sliced, or chopped
- Whole, sliced, or roses
- Sprigs or chopped



Planked Fish

1 dressed fish
(3 pounds),
fresh or frozen
Salt
Pepper
2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil
Seasoned hot mashed
potatoes

Seasoned hot cooked
vegetables
(asparagus,
broccoli,
carrots,
cauliflower,
onions, peas,
or tomatoes)

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Sprinkle inside with salt and pepper. Place fish on a preheated, oiled plank or well-greased bake and serve platter, 18 by 13 inches. Brush fish with fat. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 45 to 60 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove from oven and arrange the hot mashed potatoes and two or more hot vegetables around the fish. Makes 6 servings.



Planked Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed
fish, fresh or
frozen
2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil
2 tablespoons lemon
juice
1½ teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
Dash pepper

Seasoned hot mashed
potatoes
Seasoned hot cooked
vegetables
(asparagus,
broccoli,
carrots,
cauliflower,
onions, peas,
or tomatoes)

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Place fish in a single layer on a preheated, oiled plank or well-greased bake and serve platter, 18 by 13 inches. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Brush fish with sauce. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Remove from oven and arrange the hot mashed potatoes and two or more hot vegetables around fish. Makes 6 servings.



Planked Fillets or Steaks

2 pounds fish fillets
or steaks, fresh
or frozen

2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil

2 tablespoons lemon
juice

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon paprika

Dash pepper

Seasoned hot mashed
potatoes

Seasoned hot cooked
vegetables
(asparagus,
broccoli,
carrots,
cauliflower,
onions, peas,
or tomatoes)

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place fish in a single layer, skin side down, on a preheated, oiled plank or well-greased bake and serve platter, 18 by 13 inches. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour sauce over fish. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 20 to 25 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Remove from oven and arrange the hot mashed potatoes and two or more hot vegetables around the fish. Makes 6 servings.

Baked Fillets or Steaks

- 2 pounds fish fillets
or steaks, fresh
or frozen
- 2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon
juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Dash pepper

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place fish in a single layer, skin side down, in a well-greased baking dish, 12 by 8 by 2 inches. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour sauce over fish. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 20 to 25 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Baked Stuffed Fillets or Steaks

- 2 pounds fish fillets
or steaks, fresh
or frozen
- Bread stuffing
- 2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon
juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Dash pepper



Thaw frozen fish. Skin fillets. Cut fish into 6 portions. Place stuffing in a well-greased baking dish, 12 by 8 by 2 inches. Place fish in a single layer on stuffing. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour sauce over fish. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Baked Fish Portions or Sticks

- 12 frozen fried fish portions
(2½ to 3 ounces each)
or
- 24 frozen fried fish sticks
(¾ to 1¼ ounces
each)
- Tartar sauce

Place frozen fish in a single layer on a cookie sheet, 15 by 12 inches. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 15 to 20 minutes or until fish are heated through and flake easily when tested with a fork. Serve with a tartar sauce. Makes 6 servings.



Baked Stuffed Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed
fish, fresh or
frozen

Bread stuffing

2 tablespoons melted
fat or oil

2 tablespoons lemon
juice

1½ teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon paprika

Dash pepper

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Place fish in a single layer on a well-greased baking pan, 15 by 10 by 1 inches. Stuff fish loosely. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Brush fish with sauce. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Fried Fillets or Steaks

2 pounds fish fillets or
steaks, fresh or frozen
1/4 cup milk
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon salt

Dash pepper
1½ cups dry bread, cereal,
or cracker crumbs
Fat for frying

Thaw frozen fish. Cut fish into 6 portions. Combine milk, egg, salt, and pepper. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a single layer in hot fat in a 10-inch fry pan. Fry at a moderate heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until brown. Turn carefully. Fry 4 to 5 minutes longer or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 6 servings.

Deep-Fat Fried Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed fish,
fresh or frozen
1/4 cup milk
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon salt

Dash pepper
1½ cups dry bread, cereal,
or cracker crumbs
Fat for frying

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Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Combine milk, egg, salt, and pepper. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a single layer in a fry basket. Fry in deep fat, 350° F., for 3 to 5 minutes or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Makes 6 servings.

Oven-Fried Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed fish,
fresh or frozen
1/2 cup milk
2 teaspoons salt

1½ cups cereal crumbs or
toasted dry bread
crumbs
1/4 cup melted fat or oil

Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Combine milk and salt. Dip fish in milk and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a single layer on a well-greased baking pan, 15 by 10 by 1 inches. Pour fat over fish. Bake in an extremely hot oven, 500° F., for 15 to 20 minutes or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.



Fried Fish Portions or Sticks

- 12 frozen fried or raw
breaded fish portions
(2½ to 3 ounces each)
or
24 frozen fried fish sticks
(¾ to 1¼ ounces
each)
Fat for frying
Tartar sauce

Place frozen fish in a single layer in hot fat in a 10-inch fry pan. Fry at a moderate heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until brown. Turn carefully. Fry 4 to 5 minutes longer or until fish are brown and flake easily when tested with a fork. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve with a tartar sauce. Makes 6 servings.

Tartar Sauce

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing | 1 tablespoon chopped parsley |
| 1 tablespoon chopped olives | 1 tablespoon chopped sweet pickle |
| 1 tablespoon chopped onion | |

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Chill. Makes ¾ cup of sauce.

New England Fish Chowder

1 pound fish fillets or
steaks, fresh or frozen
2 tablespoons chopped bacon
or salt pork
1/2 cup chopped onion
2½ cups diced potatoes
1½ cups boiling water
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
2 cups milk
1 tablespoon butter
Chopped parsley

Thaw frozen fish. Remove skin and bones from fish. Cut fish into 1-inch pieces. Fry bacon until crisp. Add onion and cook until tender. Add potatoes, water, seasonings, and fish. Cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add milk and butter. Heat. Sprinkle with parsley. Makes 6 servings.

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Tuna Corn Chowder

2 cans (6½ or 7 ounces each)
tuna
1 can (10¼ ounces) frozen
condensed cream of
potato soup
3 cups milk
1 tablespoon butter or
margarine
1 tablespoon grated onion
1 small bay leaf
Dash pepper
1 can (8 ounces) whole
kernel corn
Chopped parsley

Drain tuna and break into large pieces. Combine soup, milk, butter, onion, bay leaf, and pepper. Heat until soup is thawed, stirring occasionally. Add corn and tuna; heat. Remove bay leaf. Garnish with parsley. Serves 6.



Manhattan Fish Chowder

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 pound fish fillets or
steaks, fresh or frozen | ½ cup chopped celery |
| ¼ cup chopped bacon or
salt pork | ¼ cup catsup |
| ½ cup chopped onion | 1 tablespoon Worcestershire
sauce |
| 2 cups boiling water | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 1 can (1 pound) tomatoes | ¼ teaspoon pepper |
| 1 cup diced potatoes | ¼ teaspoon thyme |
| ½ cup diced carrots | Chopped parsley |

Thaw frozen fish. Remove skin and bones from fish. Cut fish into 1-inch pieces. Fry bacon until crisp. Add onion and cook until tender. Add water, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, celery, catsup, and seasonings. Cover and simmer for 40 to 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add fish. Cover and simmer about 10 minutes longer or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Sprinkle with parsley. Makes 6 servings.

California Tuna Salad

2 cans (6½ or 7 ounces each)
tuna
2 cups orange sections
1 avocado
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup chopped celery
½ cup toasted blanched
slivered almonds
1½ teaspoons curry powder
(optional)
½ cup mayonnaise or salad
dressing
Salad greens

Drain tuna. Break into large pieces. Reserve 12 orange sections for garnish; cut remaining sections in half. Cut avocado in half lengthwise and remove seed. Peel and slice avocado; sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Reserve 6 slices avocado for garnish; cut remaining slices in fourths. Combine orange, avocado, celery, almonds, and tuna. Combine curry powder and mayonnaise. Pour over tuna mixture and blend lightly. Chill. Serve on salad greens. Garnish with orange sections and avocado slices. Serves 6.

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Baked Salmon Salad

1 can (1 pound) salmon
2 cups cooked rice
1 cup thinly sliced celery
½ cup chopped parsley
¼ cup sliced pitted ripe
olives
½ cup mayonnaise or salad
dressing
2 tablespoons French dressing
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon curry powder
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or
salad dressing
Paprika

Drain and break salmon into large pieces. Combine rice, celery, parsley, olives, and salmon. Combine mayonnaise, French dressing, lemon juice, and curry powder. Add mayonnaise mixture to salmon mixture; toss lightly. Place in 6 well-greased 6-ounce casseroles or custard cups. Top each with a teaspoon of mayonnaise. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 15 to 20 minutes or until heated. Serves 6.



Simple Seafood Salad

2 cans (6½ or 7 ounces
each) tuna
or

1 can (1 pound) salmon

1 cup chopped celery

1/3 cup mayonnaise or salad
dressing

2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

2 tablespoons chopped onion

2 tablespoons chopped sweet
pickle

Salad greens

Drain fish. Break fish into large pieces. Combine all ingredients except salad greens. Toss lightly. Chill. Serve on salad greens. Makes 6 servings.

Broiled Fish Portions or Sticks

12 frozen fried fish portions
(2½ to 3 ounces each)

or

24 frozen fried fish sticks
(¾ to 1¼ ounces
each)

Tartar sauce



Place frozen fish in a single layer on a cookie sheet, 15 by 12 inches. Broil about 4 inches from source of heat for 10 to 15 minutes or until fish are heated through and flake easily when tested with a fork. Serve with a tartar sauce. Makes 6 servings.

Charcoal Broiled Pan-Dressed Fish

3 pounds pan-dressed fish,
fresh or frozen

¼ cup melted fat or oil

¼ cup lemon juice

1½ teaspoons salt

¾ teaspoon paprika

Dash pepper

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Thaw frozen fish. Clean, wash, and dry fish. Place fish in well-greased, hinged, wire grills. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well. Brush fish with sauce. Cook about 4 inches from moderately hot coals for 5 to 8 minutes. Baste with sauce. Turn. Cook 5 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flake easily when tested with a fork. Makes 6 servings.

Charcoal Broiled Fish Portions or Sticks

12 frozen fried fish portions
(2½ to 3 ounces each)

or

24 frozen fried fish sticks
(¾ to 1¼ ounces
each)

Tartar sauce

Place frozen fish in a single layer in well-greased, hinged, wire grills. Cook about 4 inches from moderately hot coals for 4 to 5 minutes. Turn. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes longer or until fish are heated through and flake easily when tested with a fork. Serve with a tartar sauce. Makes 6 servings.

List of Fish Cookery Publications

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EDUCATIONAL CHARTS

Fish chart full-color 30 by 48 inches, "Marine Fishes of the N. Atlantic." \$1.50 0-1971-823-704

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