Cooking Tips

Bake in greased baking dish at 450ºF. Cover fish with sauce or topping to keep moist.

Broil no more than 4 inches from heat source. Baste; do not turn.

Grill on greased rack approximately 4 inches from hot coals or use a barbecue basket.

Poach in enough liquid to barely cover fish in wide, shallow pan. Boil liquid; add fish; cover tightly and simmer. Liquid may be water, milk, or wine. Add seasonings such as fresh herbs, lemon, or salt & pepper.

Steam in a deep pot. Place fish on a rack 2 inches above boiling liquid. Cover tightly.

Pan fry in ¼ to ½ inch hot canola or olive oil. Coat seafood with seasoned flour, bread or cracker crumbs.

Ten minute rule: Cook fish 10 minutes for each 1 inch of thickness measured at the thickest part.

BROILED FISH

1 pound fish steaks or fillets (halibut, salmon, snapper or tuna)
Salt & Pepper
Herbs: chopped parsley, thyme, basil, or tarragon
Lemon juice
1 tablespoon olive oil

Lightly grease broiler pan. Squeeze lemon, to taste, on fish and brush with olive oil. Season with salt & pepper, and choice of herbs. Broil until fish is light brown and begins to flake but is still moist; allow 10 minutes per inch thickness. Serve with your choice of sauce. Serves 4.

We value interest, questions, and comments.
Please feel free to contact us.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) oversees fisheries management in the United States, and through the 1946 Agricultural Marketing Act, provides a voluntary inspection service to the industry. The NOAA Seafood Inspection Program offers a variety of professional inspection services which assure compliance with all applicable food regulations. In addition, product quality evaluation, grading and certification services on a product lot basis are also provided. Benefits include the ability to apply official marks, such as the U.S. Grade A, Processed Under Federal Inspection (PUFI) and Lot Inspection. The services provided by NOAA include the following:

- Establishment Sanitation Inspection
- Process and Production Inspection
- Product Grading
- Product Lot Inspection
- Laboratory Analyses
- Training
- Consultation

www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov
USDC Seafood Inspection Program
NOAA Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Phone (301) 713-2355/(800) 422-2750
Fax (301) 713-1081

Protection Through Inspection

Simple Solutions to Handling Seafood Safely

SEAFOOD SAFETY

USDC National Oceanic and Atmospheic Administration
Seafood Inspection Program

Seafood Made Safe & Easy

Purchasing Seafood

Step up to the seafood counter or frozen fish case, and you'll see an enticing display of one type of seafood after another. How do you choose? A good first step is to wait until you are at the store before deciding which type to buy. Go ahead and plan your menu for seafood, but wait until you are at the store before deciding the exact type of fish. Here you will be able to select the freshest items in the case, and take advantage of what's on sale whether fresh or frozen.

It's easy to tell when seafood is fresh. Just follow these general guidelines.

1. When purchasing whole fish or fish fillets, look for firm flesh. If you press the fish with your finger and it leaves an indentation, it is not the highest quality, even though it still may be good to eat. Also look for shiny flesh. Dull flesh may mean that the fish is old. On fish fillets that have been previously frozen, of course, flesh may not be as shiny due to the freezing process, but are great to eat.
2. Check to make certain that there is no darkening around the edges of the fish or brown or yellowish discoloration, especially if these areas appear dry or mushy. If you are still uncertain about how fresh the fish is, ask to have it rinsed under cold water and then smell it. Fresh fish should have no fishy or ammonia smell.
3. Live clams, oysters, and mussels may have slightly gaping shells and should close tightly when tapped. If not, the shellfish may be dead and should be discarded. Live crabs and lobster legs should show leg movement. Leg activity will lessen if refrigerated, but legs should show some movement.

Most frozen fish today compares in quality to fish directly out of the water.

Fresh catches are immediately processed and frozen at very low temperatures, frequently right on board the vessel. When buying frozen fish keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. Whole fish should be free of ice crystals, with no discoloration.
2. Fillets or steaks should be solidly frozen in the package.
3. There should be no evidence of drying out, such as white spots, dark spots, discoloration or fading of red or pink flesh.
4. There should be no signs of frost or ice particles inside the package. If ice crystals are present, the fish has either been stored for a long period or thawed and refrozen. There should be no liquid, frozen or thawed evident in the package.
5. Make sure there are no open, torn or crushed edges on the packages.
6. Avoid packages that are above the frost line in a store's display freezer.

Storing Your Seafood

It's always best to cook fresh seafood within two days of purchase. If that's not possible, here are some tips to help you store it.

To store fresh fish, remove from its package, rinse under cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Refrigerate finfish as close to 32 degrees as possible. Fish can be held twice as long at 32 degrees as it can be at 37 degrees. When fish sits in its own juices, the flesh deteriorates more rapidly. To prevent this, place cleaned finfish, whole fillets or steaks onto a cake rack so that the fish do not overlap. Set the rack in a shallow pan. If it is necessary to keep the fish more than 24 hours, fill the pan with crushed ice.

Cover the pan with plastic wrap or foil, seal tightly and refrigerate. Drain and re-ice as necessary. Each day, rinse fish under cold water, clean the rack and the pan and change the ice. If the fish has a fishy or ammonia smell after being rinsed, it should be discarded. If you will not be using the fish within a day or so, it's best to freeze it immediately. To do so, rinse the fish under cold water and pat very dry with paper towels. First wrap the fish tightly in plastic wrap, squeezing all the air out, and then wrap tightly in aluminum foil and freeze. For the best quality of fish frozen at home use within two weeks.

Always thaw fish and seafood in the refrigerator. Thawing at temperatures higher than 40 degrees causes excessive drip loss and adversely affects taste, texture, aroma and appearance.