

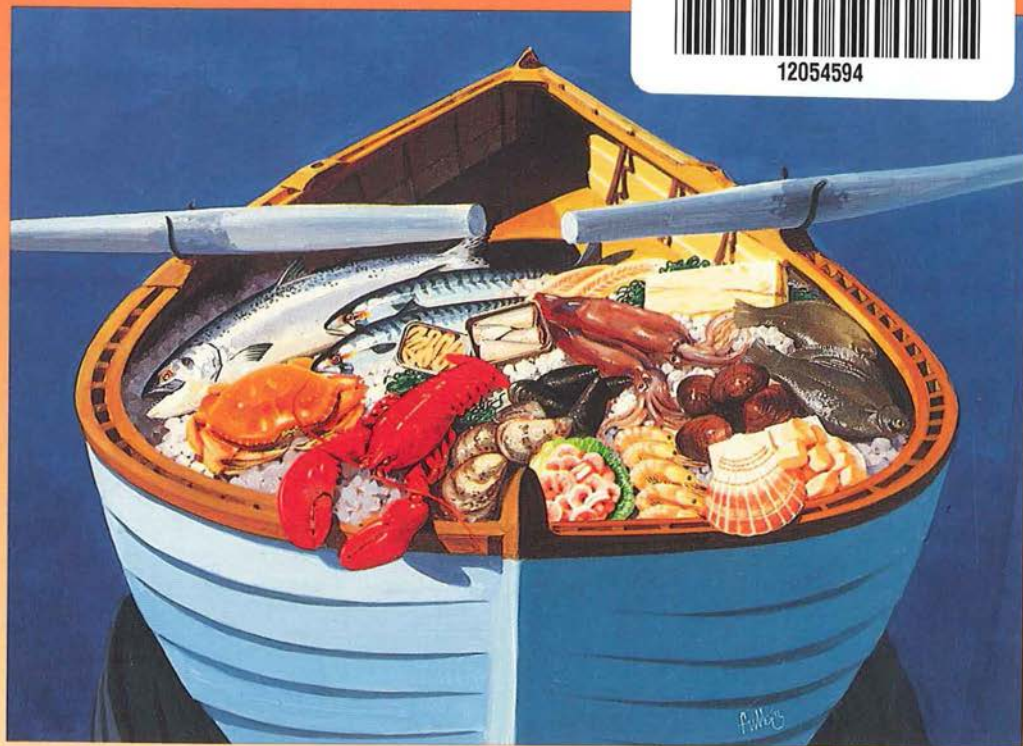
ENJOY!

*A Guide for
the Enjoyment,
Care and
Preparation of
Fish and Seafood*

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Consumers in Canada have access to some of the finest seafood to be found anywhere in the world. The Government of Canada works closely with harvesters, processors and retailers to make the industry's reputation for superior quality possible. Informed consumers, using a few simple techniques and precautions, can make certain that the chain of care and quality is maintained throughout home storage and preparation as well, ensuring that only the most flavorful, wholesome and nutritious seafood comes to Canadian tables.

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"Également disponible en français sous le titre: Bon Appétit"

Fresh Fish

As tastes become more sophisticated, many once unfamiliar species are now finding acceptance at Canadian fish counters. But consumers can be assured there is little or no difference in the general rules for the evaluation of the quality and approved treatment of most fish products.

Fin fish may be displayed and sold fresh in various forms, from totally unprocessed (or “round”) to fillet portions carefully pre-cut and trimmed to remove skin, bones and irregularities.

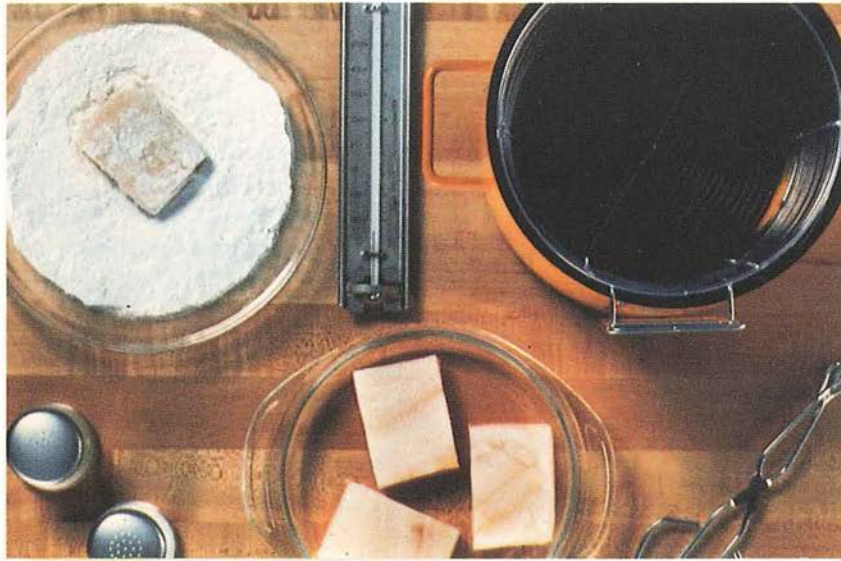
All fresh fish should be well-chilled at the point of sale, and consumers should take the utmost care to refrigerate their purchase immediately, preparing and serving it as quickly as possible.

Guidelines for the evaluation and handling of fresh fish include:

- Any odour should be faint, fresh and delicate. Fillets should present a glossy, fresh-cut appearance and a firm texture.
- Gills, if present, should be clean in appearance and bright red or pink in colour.
- Gills and internal organs of round fish should be removed and discarded as soon as possible after purchase, and cavity well washed under cold, running water. Unless proceeding to filleting stage, trim away scales and wash exterior surface as above. Fins and head may be removed or retained as desired. Fish is now in pan-ready or pan-dressed form.

- To fillet round fish, cut meaty portion away from ribs and backbone; try to avoid leaving bone fragments in flesh. Strip skin from fillets with sharp knife, keeping skin between knife edge and working surface. Examine fillet for bones, bits of skin, dark blemishes, coiled spots or discolorations; remove and discard if present. Rinse well.
- Fresh fish purchased as fillets should be subjected to the same examination and procedure outlined above.
- All surface areas used for storage, examination and preparation of fish and seafood, fresh or pre-processed, must be kept scrupulously clean, and rinsed often.

Breaded Deep-Fried Fish



Frozen Fish

Properly quick-frozen, stored and monitored, Canadian Government-inspected frozen fish products offer the convenience of extended keeping qualities in a wide range of product forms, from plain fillets to pre-cooked gourmet entrées and appetizers.

All commercially frozen fish offered for sale in Canada has been subjected to strict temperature, storage and packaging regulations. Consumers may be able to approximate these Government standards in using home freezers, but non-commercial frozen fish from an unknown source should never be used; improper techniques may have degraded the product in terms of flavour, appearance or safety.

If the surface of frozen fish is visible, as in many clear, plastic packs, check for any dried, cottony patches that may signify “freezer burn” and signs of ice crystals or frost inside the wrapping. These conditions, although they represent absolutely no hazard to health, may affect the texture and appearance of the fish when served.

However, an ice coating or glaze on the surface of a frozen fish product can generally be taken as an indication that discoloration and drying has not occurred.

Serving Fish Uncooked





Serving Fish Uncooked

Until recently the only raw seafood consumed by Canadians was in such dishes as oysters on the half shell and pickled herring. Now, the growing popularity of the "suisha" tradition of oriental cuisine, with its delicious morsels of raw or marinated fish, calls for even stricter attention to methods of preparing uncooked tidbits of seafood.

Fish species sometimes contain live parasites or microorganisms. Parasites and some microorganisms are killed by commercial freezing which subjects the fish to temperatures of a minimum of -18°C for a time period exceeding 48 hours. In general, any fish product that has been commercially frozen may be used in the preparation of raw servings without any hazard to health from parasites or effects on good nutrition. However, consumers of raw or lightly marinated raw fish need to be aware that there are some risks associated with eating any raw foods.

Parasites are white in colour or opaque and if they are present they are usually found in the fleshy portion of the fish, and can appear as a coiled spot. Further information on this subject can be obtained from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Close inspection and careful attention to sanitation should apply, as in the preparation of any fish and seafood product.

IN PREPARING UNCOOKED DISHES, ALWAYS USE FROZEN SEAFOOD PRODUCTS FROM A KNOWN AND PREFERABLY COMMERCIAL SOURCE.

Serving Cooked Fish

Steps in Baking

1. Season fish with salt, pepper and any desired herbs or spices. Stuff whole dressed or pan-ready fish with finely sliced vegetables (green pepper, mushrooms, onion, celery, etc.) or with a seasoned bread stuffing. Contain stuffing in cavity by closing with string or skewers.
2. Place fish on greased baking dish. Brush with melted butter or oil or cover with sauce.
3. Bake at 230°C (450°F) for 5 to 7 minutes per cm (10 to 12 minutes per in) thickness for fresh or thawed fish and 10 to 12 minutes per cm (20 to 24 minutes per in) for frozen fish.

Other methods of keeping fish from drying out include using a covering of vegetables as by wrapping the fish with lettuce leaves. Steaks, fillets or small fish may be prepared by layering with finely diced vegetables and/or buttered bread crumbs as au gratin.

Steps in Broiling

1. Season fish with salt and pepper and brush with melted butter or oil. For marinated pieces, remove from marinade and drain briefly. Place on well greased broiler pan.
2. Place pan under preheated broiler 10 cm (4 in) from the heating source for thawed or fresh fish and 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 in) from heat for frozen fish.
3. Broil for 5 to 7 minutes per cm (10 to 12 minutes per in) for thawed fish or 10 to 12 minutes per cm (20 to 24 minutes per in) for frozen fish. Thicker steaks may be turned and basted halfway through cooking.



Steps in Barbecuing

Place the fish on the pre-treated grill or in a barbecue basket and begin cooking. Brush fish with remaining marinade several times during cooking. Turn fish once, halfway through the cooking period.

For barbecue cooking times see step 3 above.

Steps in Microwaving

In microwave cooking thicker fish products should be cooked until outer areas will flake but inner areas are not yet ready to flake. These areas will cook during standing time and outer areas will remain tender. This prevents over-cooking.

To Microwave Cook Small Whole Dressed or Pan-Ready Fish

1. Season cavity of fish or fill with a seasoned bread stuffing or with thinly sliced vegetables. Shield head and thin tail area with foil.
2. Coat fish with mixture of melted butter, lemon juice, salt and pepper and any suitable herbs. Arrange in dish with thick muscle toward outside and thinner belly cavity towards centre of dish.
3. Cover with plastic wrap but turn back one corner to allow venting. Place in microwave oven with thicker part of fish towards outside edge.
4. Cook on HIGH for 5 minutes per 450 g (5 minutes per lb) dividing cooking time in half and turning dish at the halfway point. Cook until just done or there is slight flakiness to the flesh.
5. Allow to stand 2 to 5 minutes to complete cooking.

Barbecuing



To Microwave Cook Fish Fillets or Steaks

1. Fillets or steaks may be prepared plain or coated with bread crumbs.
2. Arrange in baking dish with thicker parts toward outer edge. Brush with mixture of melted butter, salt and pepper, lemon juice and any suitable herbs.
3. Cover with plastic wrap but turn back one corner to allow venting. Place dish in centre of oven so that thicker portions of fish are towards outer edges.
4. Cook on HIGH for 5 minutes per 450 g (5 min per lb); slightly longer for thick steaks or fillets, slightly less for thin fillets, dividing time in half and turning steaks at the halfway point. Cook until just done or there is a slight flakiness to the flesh.
5. Allow to stand 2 to 5 minutes to complete cooking.

Fish Stew



Steps in Poaching

1. Prepare poaching liquid (usually court bouillon) and place into cooking vessel.
2. Place prepared fish in enough cooled (or cold) poaching liquid to cover the fish. Heat until liquid is simmering. Begin timing. Poach for 5 to 7 minutes per cm thickness (10 to 12 minutes per in) for fresh or thawed fish. Double the time for frozen fish.
3. Remove fish from poaching liquid to serving platter. Cover and keep warm in oven if preparing sauce or glaze. Chill if serving as cold poached fish. Garnish, if desired, with thin slices of lemon and cucumber along the lateral line.

Steps in Steaming

1. Season fish (large fish may be stuffed) and place on greased rack.
2. Place 2.5 cm to 5 cm (1 to 2 in) water into cooking vessel, adding dill or parsley if desired. Water level should be below that of the rack. Heat to boiling for 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Add fish to steamer and cover. Steam for 5 to 7 minutes per cm (10 to 12 minutes per in) for fresh or thawed fish, doubling the time for frozen fish.

Steps in Oven Steaming

1. Grease a sheet of foil or the bottom of a covered casserole with butter.
2. Place prepared fish on foil or in casserole. Squeeze juice of 1 lemon over fish if desired. Season with salt and pepper (adding desired herbs). Enclose by sealing foil or by covering casserole.
3. Bake in preheated oven at 230°C (450°F) (or over a campfire or on a barbecue if wrapped in foil) for 5 to 7 minutes per cm (10 to 12 minutes per in) thickness of fresh or thawed fish doubling the time for frozen fish.

Steps in Braising Fish

1. Place small amount of court bouillon or other cooking liquid (for example, white wine and salted water or lemon juice and salted water) into cooking vessel. Add prepared vegetables and some diced tomatoes and herbs (parsley, sweet basil, thyme or oregano). Simmer together a few minutes.
2. Season fish with salt and pepper.



3. Lay fish on top of vegetables in cooking vessel. The fillet or fish should be half-immersed in the liquid, add more liquid if necessary.
4. Heat again to simmer and cook 5 to 7 minutes per cm (10 to 12 minutes per in) for frozen or thawed fish, doubling the time for frozen fish. Remove fish to warmed platter.
5. Use fine sieve or blender to puree vegetables. Prepare sauce base of flour, butter, and other additions such as mushrooms. Add pureed vegetables. Cook and stir until thickened. Spoon over the cooked fish for serving.

Steps in Stewing

1. Prepare chunks or small portions of fish from skinless fillets or steaks and sprinkle with lemon juice.
2. Prepare vegetables by slicing or dicing. These may include onions, green peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, etc.
3. Sauté vegetables (not the potatoes) in butter or oil for 3 to 5 minutes. For chowders sauté vegetable with diced bacon.
4. Remove vegetables and sauté fish chunks or portions using more butter or oil as needed. Remove sautéed pieces with slotted spoon and reserve until needed.
5. Place sautéed vegetables and all other raw vegetables in cooking vessel and cover with water and white wine if desired. (If preparing a New England style "white" chowder use only green or white vegetables and milk as half the liquid.) Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.
6. Add sautéed fish chunks or portions to cooked vegetables. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes longer. Serve immediately.

Steps for Breaded Deep-Fried Fish

1. Season pre-cut portions with salt and pepper.
2. Coat the portions by dipping first in flour and shaking off excess, then in milk or beaten egg or any thin batter and then in fine bread crumbs, cracker crumbs or cornmeal. Coat only as many portions as can be deep fried immediately.
3. Deep fry for 5 to 6 minutes or until done. Drain on absorbent paper and hold warm until served.

Steps in Pan Frying

1. Coat fish or fillets well with seasoned flour, bread crumbs, cracker crumbs, cornmeal or cornflake crumbs.
2. Pan fry in skillet in butter and oil for 5 to 7 minutes per cm thickness (10 to 12 minutes per in), turning once halfway through cooking.

Steps in Stir Frying

1. Cut skinless fillets or steaks into 3.5 cm (1½ in) squares about 1 cm (½ in) thick.
2. Salt fish pieces slightly then coat with cornstarch (plus any other ingredients suggested in recipe).
3. Heat wok (or skillet) over high heat for 30 seconds. Add oil, swirling to coat pan, heat 30 seconds longer adjusting heat to moderate if necessary. Add coated fish pieces and stir fry gently for 1 to 2 minutes until fish is firm and opaque.



Wok Frying



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