



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### LENTEN FISH HINTS

"Don't be bashful about looking a fish in the eye!"

This admonition to housewives, to assist them in the purchasing of fish during Lent, comes from the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, and, according to their technologists, "means just what it says."

"If the eyes of the fish are bright and not glazed and sunken; if the gills are reddish in color rather than gray and are free from a tainted odor; and the scales still cling tenaciously to the skin, then, Mrs. Housewife, the chances are all in favor of your having selected a fresh, healthy, and wholly edible fish to serve to your family."

With Lent now at hand, and with menus for abstinence days to be given extra consideration in their planning for the coming six weeks, the Fish and Wildlife Service offers some suggestions to housewives on the purchasing of fish, as well as some very practical information regarding various laboratory-tested methods of preparing and cooking fish and shellfish for the family table.

In the purchasing of fish the housewife, besides giving consideration to her own personal tastes as well as those of her family, should not overlook these two important points when fish-shopping.

"First, ordinarily endeavor to select fish that are in season. This assures you a wider choice of fresh stock, and gives your pocketbook the benefit of competitive prices in a well-stocked market.

"Second, select the species in the market at the time which is best adapted to the particular method of cooking you desire to follow. Fish may be purchased either whole, in fillets, steaks, or in pan-dressed form."

Fillets--the housewife learns--are the solid, all-meat sides of the entire fish cut lengthwise away from the backbone and with all other bones removed.

Fish steaks are slices through the entire body of the fish at right angles to its length. Steaks are usually cut from the larger-size fish, such as cod, halibut, swordfish, and sturgeon, and have about the same thickness as fillets.

"Pan-dressed" means that the whole fish has been eviscerated, and has had its scales removed. Sometimes this also includes the removal of the head, tail, and fins.

"When you purchase a whole fish," continues the Service's fish cookery experts, "your fish dealer generally cleans it for you and prepares it in one of the forms just mentioned. If he fails to do this of his own initiative, you should request this cleaning, with due regard to the method of cooking you expect to follow. This complete cleaning of the fish as soon as it is removed from its icing not only helps to preserve it pending the cooking but also saves you an appreciable amount of time and work in the kitchen."

Simply by the processes of nature, some fish are fat and some fish are lean, according to species, and again, and to a lesser extent, according to season.

This point, therefore, must be taken into consideration by the housewife when she is buying fish, in order that she may obtain the kind of fish best suited for the dish desired at the moment.

Almost any variety of fish may be fried or broiled. Fat fish, however, are generally preferred for baking, while lean fish are ordinarily used for boiling, steaming, or for chowders.

Individual tastes, naturally, differ in respect to methods of cooking fish, even as they do in relation to the cooking of other foods for the family table. But, generally speaking, persons engaged in hard physical labor show a preference for fried fish. To those engaged in less strenuous forms of work physically and to invalids and convalescents, other methods of cooking usually make the fish dish more appetizing. It is suggested that fish used for the evening meal be prepared by baking, steaming, broiling, or as chowder.

Since frying is one of the most popular--as well as one of the quickest--methods of preparing fish, the Fish and Wildlife Service has described the proper method of pan frying, or sauteing, in detail in a 4-page pamphlet just issued, called SEAFOOD SUGGESTIONS. A copy of the first issue may be secured free of charge by writing to the Publications Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

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