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Cooking, Cleaning, and Companions

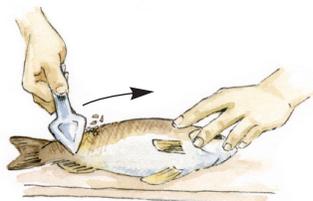
Cooking and eating a fish you caught is one of life's simple pleasures. First, however, you have to prepare it. Preparing a fish provides an opportunity to learn more about fish anatomy and fish diets. After preparing, you're ready to cook and eat the fish. Fish are low in fat and calories and are a good source of protein.

Staying Sharp

Cleaning is the technique used to prepare fish without removing bones. **Filleting** leaves the fish boneless, and occasionally skinless, and is generally used for larger fish. The most important step in preparing any fish is choosing a sharp knife of the correct size and shape. Most fillet knives have thin, slightly flexible blades five to eight inches long. A dull knife can be more dangerous than a sharp knife because you have to work harder to make the proper cuts. Make sure your knife is sharp, and hold it away from your fingers and body as you prepare your fish. Work patiently and attentively.

Cleaning Steps

- Use a spoon or fish scaler to remove scales.
- Without cutting through bones or internal organs, cut around the head, behind the pectoral fins, and down to the anus.
- Break the backbone by bending the head downward and twisting. Remove the head and internal organs.



Remove the scales.

- Check local rules, but generally you can dispose of wrapped waste in a trash bin or bury it deep in your garden. Fish waste does not belong in compost bins.



Remove the internal organs.

Fish Fillet

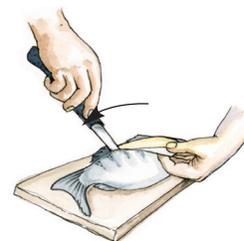
- Cut along the dorsal fin from head to tail and along the anal fin from anus to tail.
- Just behind the gill cover make a vertical cut through the flesh down to the bone. This cut extends from the back to the stomach. Deepen the cut made along the dorsal fin working from head to tail. Hold the knife nearly parallel to the row of bones extending upward from the spine to the back. This cut should extend downward only as far as the backbone.
- Repeat this procedure on the stomach side. Cut first from behind the gills to the anus, then along the anal fin cut you made earlier. These cuts should be just below the surface of the belly skin to avoid rupturing internal organs. As you cut up toward the backbone your fillet will come free.



Cut along the dorsal fin from head to tail.



Just behind the gill cover, make a vertical cut.



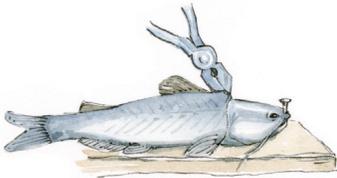
Hold the knife nearly parallel to the row of bones extending upward from the spine to the back.

Tummy Talk

Check out your fish's stomach! Examining a fish's last meal will help you become a better angler. Knowing what the fish was eating can help you better match your next lure to this species' diet.



Hold the fish down with one hand just in front of the tail fin.



For catfish, remove the skin by cutting around the head and pulling the skin off with pliers.

- Do not cut the fillet from the tail. Flip the fillet so that it is lying skin-side down. Hold the fish down with one hand just in front of the tail fin. Beginning at the tail carefully skin the fillet, working away from your hand. Work slowly and patiently; cutting too deeply will result in cutting through the skin and not cutting deeply enough will result in lost meat.
- Check local rules, but generally you can dispose of wrapped waste in a trash bin or bury it in your garden.

A note about catfish and bullheads: skin removal is accomplished by cutting around the head and pulling the skin off with pliers.

Flaky, Not Fishy

Fish are a tasty, healthy way to add a lot of muscle-building protein to your diet without adding fat. Many cookbooks have recipes specific to different species of fish, but fish can be prepared quite simply as well. Regardless of how much time you take with your fish preparation, fish should be flaky in texture and shouldn't taste fishy. The muscle layers of a properly cooked fish should separate effortlessly (flake) and the flesh will turn from translucent to white. Fish can easily be overcooked, making them taste dry. Fish can also be undercooked, which could transfer fish parasites to humans. And no fish tastes good if it was left too long in the sun after being caught, so remember to ice your fish and keep it cool! Give your own cooking skills a try by following the recipe below:

The Famous Triple Dip Fish Fry

1 pound fish fillets	1) Pat fish dry with paper towels and set aside.
1 cup flour	2) In a shallow dish, mix flour, pepper, paprika, and salt.
¼ teaspoon ground pepper	3) In another shallow dish beat egg together with water to make an egg wash.
¼ teaspoon paprika	4) In a third shallow dish, place the crushed crumbs of your choice.
¼ teaspoon salt	5) Pick up a fillet and dip it in the first bowl until coated with flour. Next dip the fillet in the egg wash, then transfer it to the third dish and pat the crumbs evenly over the entire fish. Do this for each fillet, separating them by aluminum foil on a plate.
1 egg	
1/8 cup water	
1–1½ cups bread or cracker crumbs	TO FRY Heat ¼ inch of cooking oil in a heavy skillet. When a pinch of flour sizzles in the pan, it's hot enough for the fish. Cook a few fillets at a time until the fish are brown and crispy.
cooking oil	TO BAKE Coat a pan with cooking oil and place it in the oven. Heat oven to 450°F. Place fillets on the heated pan and cook about 6-7 minutes on each side, until crispy.



Cut It Out!

Even though eating fish is healthy, you should be aware that certain lakes and rivers have special advisories about PCBs and mercury. PCBs and mercury are toxins that are found in high concentrations in the fish of some lakes. Check the DNR Website at dnr.wi.gov/fish/consumption to investigate which ones have advisories.

You can safely enjoy fish from Wisconsin waters as a regular part of a healthy diet. Just observe these recommendations in the DNR's *Choose Wisely* fish consumption guide: cut the fat off of your fish; eat younger, smaller fish; and eat a wide variety of fish.

Swimming Upstream

Fishing is an amazing way to spend time outdoors, learn about the natural world, enjoy time with family and friends, explore the state, and catch fabulous food. But maintaining a healthy fishery requires our attention and care. If you see something that concerns you while out on the water—litter, erosion, a thick mat of algae—do something about it! The future of fishing in this state rests in the hands of those who regularly use it. If you think fishing is a valuable and important pastime, it's up to you to make your voice heard and your opinions matter.

There are direct and indirect paths to helping protect our natural resources. Some people choose to dedicate their lives to natural resources in careers at conservation organizations like the DNR. If you are planning a career in natural resources, check the DNR Website for a sampling of jobs in the field. If you see one that looks great, interview someone in that job to find out what sort of skills you should be getting while still in school. You can also check university Websites to see what types of courses they offer for people interested in our natural resources.

You don't need a career in conservation to be a conservationist. No matter what career you choose, artists, economists, cashiers, mathematicians, and flight attendants, to name a few, can all advocate and volunteer on behalf of natural resources. There are many ways to stay involved with and learn more about

Wisconsin's fish and waters. Here are a few suggestions:

- Take a friend fishing. One of the best ways to gain support for the resource is to introduce others to it.
- If you like trout fishing, or are interested in starting, contact Trout Unlimited to see if they have a chapter near you. You could help with a restoration effort, or meet others who want to help trout.
- Start a fishing club at your school or join one in your community.
- Speak up! Write letters to your representatives and senators about your resource concerns and vote as soon as you are eligible!
- Get outside. Being an active observer is the first step to working for the changes you would like to see.

It's not always easy to improve our natural resources, but neither is it to swim upstream and plenty of fish do it every year. Keep your eyes on the water and your mind open. Even if you don't continue fishing, you will continue to live in a world where water resources and aquatic wildlife will play a role in the health and stability of our planet. Don't lose touch with the water in your world!

Cheap Date

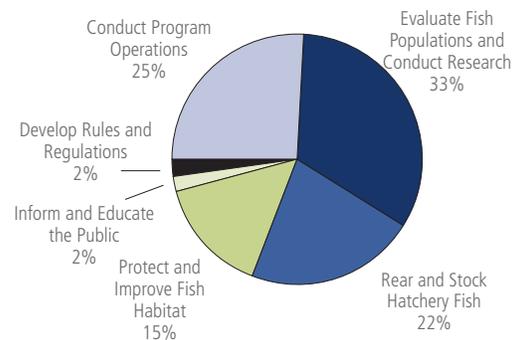
Take your date or a pal fishing! After a small annual investment, you can fish 365 days a year with whomever you want. Many Wisconsin communities are situated on or near fishable waters. Pack a picnic, call a friend or two, hop on your bike, and head for the water's edge.



A love of fishing has inspired generations of anglers to pay close attention to natural resources. Invite a friend to join you in enjoying the beauty and excitement that fishing offers.

Where does your license money go?

Money collected through the Sport Fish Restoration Fund and fish license fees funds the fisheries program at the Department of Natural Resources. Within the fisheries program, the money gets divided into many different projects, illustrated in the pie chart below:



All that for less than the cost of one night on the town! *Data from 2006 DNR Fishing Report*

Compare the cost of a day of fishing to other leisure activities. Consider total costs of participation and how often you can use your investment. Here are some examples:

ACTIVITY	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	COST	ONE-TIME USE OR OPPORTUNITY	MULTIPLE USES OR OPPORTUNITIES
Fishing	License & Stamps Rod Reel Bait Tackle Other:			
Prom	Ticket Clothes Dinner Flowers Special Transportation Other:			
A night out Several options: movie, food, gasoline. List what you would do.				
A night at home Several options: games, music, snacks. List what you would do.				

Glossary

Arbor knot

a knot used to tie fishing line to a reel

Bait

live or dead animal material used to attract fish to a hook

Baitcasting

a rod and reel combination designed for larger baits

Barbels

slender, whisker-like taste receptors found on certain fish, such as catfish, bullheads, and sturgeon; used to find food

Blood Knot

a knot used to tie two fishing lines of similar width together

Bobber

a float used to keep terminal tackle at the desired depth in the water

Cast

the action of sending fishing line out over the water

Clinch Knot

a knot used to tie a fishing hook to a fishing line

Consider Proper Release (CPR)

the steps to follow when releasing a caught fish

Creel clerk

DNR fisheries staff who gathers information from anglers such as catch rates and the size and number of fish harvested on a particular lake. The number of boats and weather data are also recorded to help determine fishing pressure.

Downrigger

a special type of fishing tackle that gets lures down into deeper water (e.g. Great Lakes)

Ethical

good, respectable, acceptable

Fillet

a cutting technique used to remove the bones from fish

Fly

an artificial lure designed to imitate an insect

Fly-fishing Gear

a rod and reel combination consisting of a long, flexible rod and a simple reel that holds the line but does not assist the angler in casting

Guides

the loops found along a fishing rod that hold the fishing line in place

Hellgrammite

the aquatic nymph stage of a dragonfly; used for fish bait

Hook

the tackle used to attach a fish to fishing line, usually used with bait

Improved Clinch Knot

a knot used to tie a fishing hook to fishing line

Jig

a type of lure; a hook with a colorful weight attached to the top of the hook

Lateral line

a canal along the side of a fish containing pores with sensory organs that detect vibrations

Line

a thin, strong, often clear, cord used to attach a fishing hook to a reel

Lure

a combination of colorful artificial bait and hook, attached to a fishing line, to attract fish

Marabou

a type of feather that looks lifelike underwater and is attached to a lure to attract fish

Nail Knot

a knot used to tie fishing lines of different diameters together

Navigable

water being deep enough and wide enough to allow a boat to pass

PFD

a personal flotation device, or lifejacket, used to hold a person's head above water

Palomar Knot

a knot used to tie a fishing hook to a fishing line

Plastic Tail

a piece of plastic used to imitate worms, salamanders, eels, or frogs; usually tied below a jig or weight to attract fish

Plug

a lure designed to imitate a small fish or other aquatic animal

Popper

an artificial bug-like fly that pops as it is pulled along the water's surface

Pork Rind

a colored, cured strip of pork skin that is attached to a jig to attract fish

Possession Limit

the maximum number of a species that you can control, transport, etc., at any time; includes fish you have at home or in a vehicle. It is twice the daily bag limit.

Rapala

a type of fishing lure

Reel

a piece of tackle used to hold fishing line and to assist an angler in casting and retrieving line

Riparian

living or located on the bank of a natural waterbody

Rod

a fishing pole, used to extend the distance an angler can cast

Sinker

a weight used to hold terminal tackle below the surface of the water at the level desired by the angler

Snap

a piece of tackle used to assist the angler in attaching a hook or lure to fishing line

Spincasting Gear

a rod and reel combination with a push-button closed-bail reel; good for beginners

Spinner

a lure that has blades which spin as it is pulled through the water

Spinnerbait

a weighted lure with one or two spinning blades attached to it

Spinning Gear

a rod and reel combination with an open-bail reel designed for long backlash-free casting

Spoon

a lure that wobbles and flutters as it is retrieved

Stink Bait

smelly bait often used to attract catfish

Stringer

a string or wire that anglers hang fish from

Swivel

a piece of tackle used to connect a hook or lure to a fishing line

Tackle

fishing gear

Terminal Tackle

the combination of tackle used at the end of a fishing line, generally consisting of hooks, bait, lures, sinkers, snaps, and swivels

Total Daily Bag Limit

the total number of fish that an angler may keep in one day from all Wisconsin waters

Uni Knot

a versatile knot used in many fishing applications

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS)

an invasive disease that causes fish to bleed to death

Fishing Journal

Date & Time

Location (DETAILED)

Weather Details

AIR TEMPERATURE: _____

WATER TEMPERATURE: _____

SKY: Clear Partly Cloudy _____ % Cover Overcast

WIND: Direction _____ Calm Breezy Windy

PRECIPITATION: None Drizzle Hard Rain Snow

Catch

1 SPECIES: _____ SIZE: _____ KEPT?: _____
BAIT: _____ METHOD: _____
LOCATION OF CATCH (CURRENT, WAVES, STRUCTURE): _____

2 SPECIES: _____ SIZE: _____ KEPT?: _____
BAIT: _____ METHOD: _____
LOCATION OF CATCH (CURRENT, WAVES, STRUCTURE): _____

3 SPECIES: _____ SIZE: _____ KEPT?: _____
BAIT: _____ METHOD: _____
LOCATION OF CATCH (CURRENT, WAVES, STRUCTURE): _____

4 SPECIES: _____ SIZE: _____ KEPT?: _____
BAIT: _____ METHOD: _____
LOCATION OF CATCH (CURRENT, WAVES, STRUCTURE): _____

Next Time Bring:

Special Notes: (INSECT HATCH, SPAWNING, ETC)

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Special thanks to the many angler education instructors who have helped to guide our program efforts over the years and have taken the time to introduce youth to Wisconsin's fishery.

With all due respect to 19th Century French sculptor, Auguste T. Rodin, we are using playful renditions of his masterpiece, *The Thinker* to lead us through these guides. The Philadelphia Museum of Art houses the original sculpture and notes on their Website that "Rodin was faithful to nature in his work."

We hope these words and your experiences outdoors will inspire you to do the same in your work and play.

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