

## **Fish and Seafood**

When buying fresh fish and seafood watch for bright, clear eyes... reddish-pink gills...bright color sheen or tightly adhering scales...firm elastic flesh...no objectionable odors.

With frozen products check for uniformity and general appearance. Be sure there is no evidence of dehydration or thawing and refreezing. Thaw and smell, then cook and taste and smell. Check color of the meat, delicate flavor and the "fresh smell" characteristic of top quality products well handled. Fish and seafood should be uniform after cooking and present a good plate appearance.

### **Handle With Care**

- Frozen products are fragile and should not be dropped. Place in freezer immediately (in original airtight package to preserve quality). They can be stored for several months if kept at zero degrees or below. Rotate supply on a first-in, first out basis.
- Thaw un-breaded products in the refrigerator. Allow 24 to 36 hours for one-pound packages and 48 to 72 hours for five-pound solid pack packages.
- Breaded products should never be thawed before cooking; they should be cooked from the frozen state.
- Fresh fish and seafood should be refrigerated at approximately 32° degree F at all times and not held for more than one or two days.

### **Helpful Cooking Hints**

Proper preparation makes sure your patrons get their fish selection the way they like it, tender and flaky. To make sure they come back for more, follow these general rules :

- Never overcook. This is the most common mistake in preparing fish. Overcooking dries out and toughens the product. Unlike meat, fish has very little connective tissue. Even raw, fish is tender. It is cooked to develop the delicate flavor and texture.
- Fish is translucent when raw and turns opaque when cooked. Also, fish is done when it flakes easily when probed with a fork.
- For moist, flavorful fish, serve immediately after cooking. Holding results in a softened texture in breaded products and dryness in un-breaded products.

### **Seafood Cookery Methods**

Whatever method of cooking your favorite fish recipe calls for, you'll want to be sure you follow these basic rules

#### **Deep Fry**

1. Use fresh, bland shortening or oil as a cooking medium. Set thermostat at 360-375° F. Occasionally check temperature gauge on fryer by placing a thermometer in the hot oil.
2. Dip fish or seafood in batter, or milk and breading. If using frozen breaded product. **DO NOT THAW!**
3. Do not overload fryer. When too much product is dropped into hot oil, the oil does not make a quick recovery to proper temperature.

4. Fry approximately 4-5 minutes, depending on thickness, until golden brown; or follow package directions. Fish usually floats when done. To be sure, break open a piece to see if it opaque at the center.
5. Drain and serve immediately.

### **Broil**

1. Brush fish with melted butter or margarine.
2. Place on oiled pan, skin side down.
3. Put 2-4 inches from heat (thin fillets closer): broil 5-15 minutes (thin fillets less time): brush with melted butter or margarine to keep moist.

### **Sauté and Pan Fry**

1. To sauté, lightly dust thawed, dry product with seasoned flour; place in pan with small amount of oil. Brown lightly over low heat; turn carefully and lightly brown other side.
2. With your own breading, dip thawed dry product in milk; roll in lightly seasoned breading. Place in heavy skillet with 1/8 inch hot oil and fry over moderate heat until browned. Turn and brown other side. Do not burn breading.

### **Bake**

1. Arrange portions in bottom of well-oiled pan.
2. Brush with butter or margarine.
3. Bake in 350-400°F oven for shortest time until done. (Fillets should flake easily and turn opaque).

### **Steam and Poach**

1. To steam, place fish on rack over liquid in shallow pan: cover tightly and cook in oven or on range top. Or use steam cooker.
2. Bring liquid to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for approximately 10 minutes, depending on thickness, or until fish flakes easily and turns opaque.
3. To poach, wrap fish in cheesecloth or place on wire rack or foil. Immerse in seasoned stock or court bouillon. Proceed as in steaming.