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HOW TO COOK SEAFOOD TO PERFECTION

BASIC SEAFOOD COOKING METHODS

... the light and lean way!

The following preparation methods serve as basic guidelines for preparing seafood to delicious perfection while still keeping calories at a minimum.

Perfectly cooked fish is moist and has a delicate flavor. There's no secret about cooking fish properly. Fish is done when the flesh has just begun to turn from translucent to opaque (or white) and is firm but still moist. It should flake when tested with a fork.

The 10-Minute Rule for Fish

The 10-Minute Rule is one way to cook fish by conventional methods (but not deep-frying or microwaving). It can be used for baking (at 400 to 450 degrees), grilling, broiling, poaching, steaming and sautéing. Here is how to use the 10 Minute Rule:

- Measure the fish at its thickest point. If the fish is stuffed or rolled, measure it after stuffing or rolling.
- Cook fish about 10 minutes per inch, turning it halfway through the cooking time. For example, a 1-inch fish steak should be cooked 5 minutes on each side for a total of 10 minutes. Pieces less than 1/2 inch thick do not have to be turned over. Test for doneness. Flake with a fork. Fish should reach an internal temperature of 145 degrees.
- Add 5 minutes to the total cooking time for fish cooked in foil or in sauce.
- Double the cooking time for frozen fish that has not been defrosted. Use this rule as a general guideline since fillets often don't have uniform thickness.

Bake

Place seafood in baking dish. Add sauce or topping to keep moist. Cover and bake at 400 to 450 degrees until done.

Broil

Place seafood in broiler pan. Brush with marinade, sauce, small amount of margarine, lemon juice or other topping. Flavor as desired with herbs and spices such as pepper and dill weed. Broil 4 to 5 inches from heat source without turning. Cook until done.

Poach

Estimate amount of liquid needed to cover seafood in poaching pan or saucepan. Suggested liquids include seasoned water, chicken broth, tomato juice or wine. Season liquid as desired. Bring to boil; cover and simmer about 10 minutes. Add seafood and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until done.

Steam

Place seafood on a steaming rack, set two inches above boiling liquid, in deep pot. Season as desired. Cover tightly. Reduce heat and steam until done.

Grill or Barbecue

Place seafood (see below for seafood types and marinade recipe) on lightly-oiled grill. Get coals red hot or turn grill to high. Baste with sauce or marinade as desired. Turn halfway through cooking time. Continue to baste throughout cooking time. Cook until done.

Sauté

Use non-stick pan or heat a small amount of margarine or oil with liquid such as wine, in frying pan or sauté pan. Add vegetables as desired. Add seafood and sauté over medium heat until done.

Grilled Seafood Types

Steaks:

Place any firm fish steak (sword, shark, tuna, halibut or salmon) directly on the grates over the hottest section. Sear steaks 1 to 2 minutes per side to seal in the juices. Finish cooking just slightly away from the hottest area, or finish cooking in a 450 degree oven if desired following the 10 minute rule.

Skin-on Fillets:

(Whitefish, Coho Salmon or Rainbow Trout). Cover the grates with aluminum foil, oiled lightly. Season fish according to your tastes and cook on top of foil, skin side down, following the 10 minute rule.

Skinless Fillets:

Cook fillets in a foil "tent." Place fillet on foil. Sprinkle with white wine and favorite herbs. If desired, lay sliced blanched vegetables on top of fillet. Seal foil making a "tent" which allows space for steam to collect. Cook according to 10 minute rule. Allow slightly more time if vegetables are on top of fish.

Whole Fish:

Stuff and/or season any whole fish to your tastes. Wrap in foil and place on the grill. Use the 10 minute rule per fish side, turning halfway through to cook evenly. Suggested species: Cape, bluefish, tautaug, mackerel, pollock, cod or salmon.

Seafood Kabobs:

Marinate firm fish chunks (sharks, Sword, Halibut, tuna) or sea scallops in herbs and oil for approximately two hours and then skewer with parboiled vegetables such as onions, peppers and mushrooms. Add tomatoes for color. Place on hot grill, cooking 10-15 minutes depending on size of fish chunks. Turn skewers frequently.

Marinades:

For firm fleshed fish steaks or kabobs use a marinade made by combining the ingredients below. Allow fish to marinate at least two hours.

Quick & Easy Marinade for Grilling:

2 cups oil

1 cup dry white wine

4 shallots, finely chopped

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon paprika, salt and pepper to taste