Wisconsin State Journal, Sunday, February 27, 2000

## DAYBREAK



#### Continued from Page 1G

elastic, and either pink, white or red, depending on the species.

Fresh fish gills must be shiny and moist. Scales lie close to the skin, and the skin adheres to the bones.

#### ow long can fresh fish and seafood last in the refrigerator?

By the time fresh fish and seafood gets to a fish shop, it has been out of the water about 48 hours, so you might get another three days in your refrigerator. In the refrigerator, fish must be wrapped and packed in ice (don't let the ice touch the fish or it will "burn" the flesh).

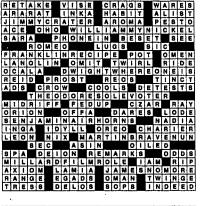
Don't let the fish sit in melted ice — a better idea is to cook it the day you buy it. If allowed to loiter in the refrigerator, much of the fish's flavor will be lost, and everything else in your fridge will take on a fishy smell. Don't refreeze fish after it has been thawed.

' hat's the best way to buy and store frozen fish?

It's safest to buy vacuum-packed fish marked 'deep-frozen product'' with a freezing date on it. Deep freezing is much faster than ordinary freezing, which happens slowly.

In your freezer, fish should be kept at 4 degrees Farenheit to stop microbial activity. But don't keep it frozen too long since it will get "freezer burn," causing the flesh to harden. Once it's thawed.

## Crossword answers



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dip it into water to stop dehydration and oxidation. Commercial fishermen often

use a preservative called tripoly phosphate, which helps seafood absorb liquid. The problem is that its taste offends some people. "Dry pack" seafood doesn't use

it. However, many seafood items, especially bay scallops, rarely come in dry packs. Other seafood has a seawater coating — that's what you are seeing when you look in a display case and see seafood surrounded by chipped ice. For buying fish, many local

chefs recommend Madison's three Seafood Centers, Whole Foods, and Ken Kopps and Brennans. Other supermarkets and stores have good fish and seafood on occasion. No matter where you buy, ask when the shipment came in.

When buying fish, plan for about 7 ounces per person (not including skin and bones). Also, make your decision on how much to buy based on what else is on your menu.

#### hat types of fish are recommended?

Chilean sea bass is considered among the best fish out there. It has been available in the United States for about five years and is one of the best tasting and most popular. Its prices have almost tripled since it first arrived.

Corbena, grouper and snapper from Florida, Fiji and Hawaii are much sought after. Fresh salmon from the Copper River, especially at the beginning of the season, is also popular.

Popular species very often are overfished. Cod off Nova Scotia was fished to point of disappearance. Chilean sea bass is now in trouble. For several years, reputable chefs agreed not to serve swordfish because the population dropped perilously low. Swordfish populations are coming back, so swordfish has been available in the Madison for the last few weeks.

Sharks were similarly overfished. Conscientious diners and buyers keep track of what species are threatened and boycott them until the populations are replenished.

On the flip side, escalar is a delicious fish but has a regrettable Montezuma's revenge effect on about half the people who eat it. Orange roughy sometimes comes from polluted canals. Also, avoid salmon from South America.

hat are some tips for preparing fish?

■ To debone fish, use a spring-loaded needle-nose pliers (about \$3 at a hardware store). It takes about minute to pull out the bones. Many fish are



ANDREA ZANI/photo

Throwing kerosene on the fire at the end of a fish boil clears the kettle of fishy-tasting oils that float to the top in cooking.

# It wouldn't be Wisconsin without fish fries and boils

#### **Fish bolls**

Fish boils have been part of Door County's fishing culture at least as long as recorded history, and in restaurants since 1959.

In the summer, Lake Michigan whitefish and new potatoes are boiled in kettles of salted water over hardwood fires. At the end, the cook throws kerosene onto the flames, creating a fireball that makes the pot boil over — this last step clears the kettle of fishy-tasting oils that floated to the top in cooking.

Then, the fish and potatoes are laid out and eaten with cole slaw, bread and cherry pie.

A famous fish boil in Door County is at White Gull Inn in Fish Creek. (920) 868-3517.

If you want fish for your own fish boil in Door County, try Teskie's Berry Best Foods and Fish, 12266 Highway 42, in Ellison Bay, (920) 854-4443. They sell fresh, smoked and pickled whitefish, and whitefish pate. - Chris Martell

shrimp, scallops, clams, mussels. Fish that are prized for their flavor, like tuna and swordfish, are not being used to full advantage in soups or stews.

🔳 Fish steaks that hold together are best for grilling. Salmon, tuna, swordfish, mahi mahi, marlin, trout, halibut and grouper are well-suited to the grill.

Marinades, even if they are nonfat, help keep the fish from sticking to the grill and drying out. "Dry Rubs" — seasoning that is rubbed on the surface - are good for grilled fish as well. Strongflavored fish can hold up to stronger flavors, like apple cider, barbecue glazes and fresh herbs.

Spray the grill with nonstick spray. Let the fish cook for about three minutes on one side before turning. u try to turn it too soon it will fall apart, and the grill marks, which are considered desirable, will be wrecked. ■ Cooking fish in parchment or foil ("en papillote") will keep in moisture and let aromatic ingredients such as wine, lemon, garlic, onion or chervil penetrate the flesh. White-fleshed, delicately flavored fish is good to cook with this method. Parchment paper, available at places like Williams Sonoma or Vanilla Bean, can be cut open at the table so the scent can waft over the diners. Filets can be wrapped in parchment individually, or the entire fish can be shrouded in it. Parchment is used instead of foil, in most cases, simply because it is prettier. To use it, put a piece on a cookie sheet, put fish and other ingredients on it, put on a top sheet and roll the edges of the two pieces of paper together. Use a conventional oven to bake it since a convection oven is apt to burn the paper. Cooking the same way in foil works well in the oven or on a grill. Remember, the parchment

should not be eaten. Other ways to cook fish include:

Baking - Try it with butter or mayonnaise-onion-grated cheese on top, or a vegetable garnish. Baste often and consider using a cream sauce with it (they come in packages if you don't want to make them from scratch).

Double boiler ("bain-marie") — This is for making mousse or fish loaf. It can be done in the oven or on the stove.

Frying — Dip it in batter or dredge it in flour, then fry in hot oil.

A la Meuniere - This method, usually for smaller fish, calls for dipping the fish in flour and cooking it in butter in a skillet.

Poaching (braising) — The fish is cooked in a small amount of liquid, like wine, usually with a vegetable garnish. It is usually done in a covered pot in the oven.

**Steaming** — The fish is steamed in liquid, using a basket steamer or rack in a covered container, or a pressure cooker.

The easiest way to keep your hands and kitchen surfaces clean while working with fish is to pour a capful of bleach into a bucket or basin of warm water. Dip your hands whenever you change a task. Keep several wash rags in the water, to wipe the work surfaces when necessary. After you use the rags, put them back in the water.

Cooking times for fish depend on the thickness and type of fish, and whether it's fresh or frozen. Raw or undercooked fish and seafood can carry parasites or be contaminated with bacteria. Infants, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems should not eat it.

As for everyone else, chefs and health department officials have different opinions on this question. Chefs at upscale restaurants tend to undercook fish, leaving it slightly translucent in the center (internal temperature about 130 degrees) because overcooked fish is dry and tasteless. Health and food safety officials, in contrast, suggest an internal temperature of 160 degrees, and suggest that the flesh be opaque and flaky.

When you cook fish like trout or walleye pike over an open fire, you can put it in a simple dredge of flour with salt and pepper, and saute it in butter or bacon fat. If the butter is clarified, it will tolerate higher heat without scorching. Campers also wrap freshly caught fish with butter, lemon wedges and dill or other seasonings in heavy-duty foil and set it on a grate over the fire.

#### hat are some suggested wines to pair with fish? In general, most fish

go well with light, citrusy white wines. Fish with stronger flavors, or those cooked in sherry or paired with heavier ingredients or sauces can be paired successfully with more substantial wines. If a fish is served with a powerful sauce, the wine should be paired with the sauce rather than the

#### hat's the word on other types of seafood?

7G

Scallops - The biggest type of scallops are sea scallops, which usually cost about \$14. a pound. These are good in butter and cream and some Asian flavors, like ginger and sesame.

Bay scallops are much smaller and are good cooked in sherry and can be cooked with much stronger flavors. The best are harvested in very cold waters, and some of the best in the world are from Chile. Use a heavy bottom pan to cook them.

Chefs say there should be a slight translucence when scallops are cooked, with a warm exterior. You might need to cut one open to check. For instance, a deep-fried scallop might have a crisp brown," caramelized exterior and still be undercooked inside.

Scallops are 100 percent protein and you wouldn't want to add breading. When cooking, no oil will be absorbed. When overcooked scallops taste like a pencil. eraser. Boiling scallops doesn't add flavor, so they are best sau teed.

Shrimp — Buy shrimp with the shell on. Shrimp purchased after it has been peeled and deveined will be less flavorful. Although it is tradition to devein shrimp, it is for aesthetic rather than sanitary reasons. Eating shrimp that hasn't been deveined won't hurt you.

Each shrimp has "veins" (a euphemism for intestines) on the back and front. To devein, take a sharp knife and make an incision along the spine, then gently push out the vein. When you peel the shrimp, leave the tail on so the shrimp stays intact.

There are two colors of shrimp, white and yellow, both of which turn pink after cooking. Almost all shrimp available in the Midwest is frozen, but you can't generally tell the difference between good quality frozen and fresh shrimp.

If you are wondering about the "Fabian" trucks that are seen parked around Madison selling fresh shrimp from the back: They are from Galveston, Texas, and have driven straight through with their haul.

An easy way to cook shrimp is sauteed in sherry, which will caramelize its exterior and give it a smoky flavor and beautiful glaze. Saute on high heat with clarified butter or ghee.

**Oysters** — Shucking an oyster, which should come to your kitchen alive, is one of the most dangerous things you can do in the kitchen. Take an oyster shucker, find a crack near the hinge and pry it open without impaling the palm of your other hand; then detach the oyster from the shell but let it stay, detached, in the shell (unless they are being served out of the shell). Plunge, twist, pop.

Oysters should be eaten raw to best preserve its briny flavor. It's considered an aphrodisiac, and recent research hints that the mollusk's zinc content, may, in fact, make it nature's Viagra. They also are used in stews, Rockefeller-style, with pasta and, mignonnettes, relishes and sauces. Buy oysters only if they are closed. If they are open in the store, they are already dead and shouldn't be used. They should smell like the ocean, with a mel-ony, flowery touch. Of all the seafood, oysters present the greatest risk of contamination. Squid and octopus — In the Midwest, these are almost always frozen. Squid's ink pouches are cut out and sometimes in use to color pasta or pasta sauces. You get the tubes and tentacles. Squid is the most fished species in the United States, but almost all of it is exported to Asia. Squid is usually breaded and deep fried as calamari rings, and it is used in many stir fries. Octopus is often steamed and some people like it Greek style, with nothing but a shot of ouzo.

fish because of laziness.

German tradition, potato pancakes. Some places also offer higher-priced walleye or perch along with the lower-priced basic fish fry.

The biggest fish fry in the state is at Serb Memorial Hall, on Milwaukee's southwest side, (414) 545-6030.

So just how did Friday fish

fries become so popular in our

Wisconsin has a large

Roman Catholic population,

and old church rules forbade

Fridays. Wisconsin Catholics,

especially in the southeastern

part of the state, responded by

for fried fish on Fridays.

going to restaurants and taverns

The church rules against

meat on Fridays are gone, ex-

cept during the period before

sands of fish fries remain.

Easter known as Lent. But thou-

or batter-fried fish, usually had-

dock or cod, with cole slaw, rye

bread, french fries and, in the

Most offer chunks of breaded

the faithful from eating meat on

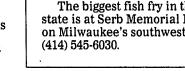
state?

deboned before they are sold.

To make fish look larger on a plate, cut it on the bias to make the surface appear larger.

As for the skin, some fish, such as trout and those in the salmon family, have skin that is tasty, so it is a good idea to leave it on. In many cases, skin is left on

For soups, stews and paella, look for firmer fish that can be cut into chunks. Try North Atlantic whitefish, monkfish, haddock,







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# Not all primroses survive outdoors

DIANE

BROWN

plants.

through May.

mites and slugs.

RYTLEWSKI

Q. I received several potted primroses as a gift. How do I care for them? Can they be planted outside later this year?

A. There are several species of primrose grown as pot plants. However, not all of them are suited to growing outdoors in our Wisconsin climate.

One of the most common, the polyantha primrose (Primula polyantha) can be transplanted into your garden in spring. It has small green leaves, so heavily veined that they almost look quilted. The flowers come in many bright or pastel shades of yellow, pink, blue, purple, or white with a yellow eye in the center of the flower.

Indoors, keep the soil evenly moist, but do not overwater. A cool room (temperatures in the low to middle 60s) with an eastern exposure would be ideal. Avoid placing them near heat registers. Wait until the danger of heavy frost has passed before you move them outdoors.

fish.

Here are wine suggestions from Joe Alm and Robert Abendroth of Steve's Liquor in Madison.

Salmon — If poached, try Californian pinot noir or a French white burgundy; if grilled, try an Alsatian pinot blanc, pinot noir or a light zinfandel.

**Ťrout** — Sauvignon blanc, white burgundy, or rose.

Tuna — Burgundy, pinot noir, zinfandel or cabernet sauvignon. Bass --- If freshwater, sauvignon blanc or white burgundy; for sea bass, try Alsatian riesling,

champagne, sancerre, or vouvray. Bouillabaisse — Rose or sparkling wine.

Flounder - French chablis or

pinot grigio. Swordfish — Alsatian riesling or pinot noir.

Cod — Alsatian pinot gris, chardonnay, or white burgundy. Halibut — Sauvignon blanc or

- chardonnay. Sushi Champagne, vouvray, or sancerre.
- Mahi mahi White burgundy or sauvignon blanc.

Mussels/oysters - French cha-

blis, sauvignon blanc or muscadet.

When you plant them outdoors,

Your primroses probably won't

bloom again until next year. Poly-

Primroses don't have many in-

antha primroses bloom in April

sect problems, but they are sus-

ceptible to injury from spider

1

choose a location that is shaded,

with moist soil. Set the plants

firmly in place and be sure to

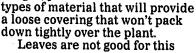
mulch around the base of the

Primroses should be mulched ON GARDENING overwinter with evergreen boughs, pine needles or other

MARY

FRANCES

HEIMANN



purpose.

Two other primroses that you may encounter as gift plants are the fairy primrose (Primula malcoides) and Primula obconica. The flowers of these primulas are somewhat smaller than the polyanthas and come in shades of pink, lilac, crimson or rose. These primulas need cooler temperatures (50 to 55 degrees) and moist soil to thrive, and are cultivated only as potted plants.

They flower during the winter months and are not suitable for growing outdoors. They are generally discarded after flowering and started fresh from seed.

Write to plant pathologists Sister Mary Francis Heimann and Diane Brown-Rytlewski, c/o the Wisconsin State Journal, P.O. Box 8058, Madison, Wis. 53708.

Sources: Pat Ludeman, Dane County University Extension family living educator; Susan Nitzke, Ph.D., Nutrition Science, UW-Madison; Scott Kennedy, The Seafood Center; Eric Rupert, The Opera House.