Cooking Freshwater Fish

A nutrition booklet with healthy and tasty recipes to improve fish consumption
This booklet is one of the products of the Clean Fish Better Life campaign.

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS BOOK?

Fish is one of the most nutritious foods you can find. It contains most of the nutrients you need for a healthy life.

This booklet aims to help grow appreciation for the nutritional value and goodness of fish. It proposes healthy and tasty ways of preparing fish that are alternatives to deep-frying, which is very common but less healthy.

As well as a good source of protein, minerals and vitamins for the family, it is also a valuable food for pregnant women, infants, the elderly and people with ill health.

It focuses on freshwater fish but most recipes can be used for marine fish as well.

You will find simple, illustrated, easy to follow step by step preparation and cooking instructions for traditional healthy recipes, as well as some new ones.

All recipes use easily available ingredients, and can be prepared with equipment found in any kitchen in your village.

Go ahead, feel free to try our recipes and may be add your own ideas.

ENJOY YOUR MEAL!
INTRODUCTION

WHY IS IT GOOD TO EAT FISH?

FISH IS VERY NUTRITIOUS, IT HELPS BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN BABIES AND REDUCES THE RISK OF PREMATURE BIRTH

IT’S RICH IN MINERALS AND MANY OTHER NUTRIENTS THAT OUR KIDS NEED TO CONCENTRATE IN SCHOOL

IT CONTAINS HEALTHY OILS (OMEGA 3) THAT REDUCE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE, CANCER, DIABETES, JOINT AND BONE DISEASES THAT CAN OCCUR IN OLD AGE

IT’S VERY RICH IN VITAMINS AND PROTEINS AND IT’S EASY TO DIGEST
INTRODUCTION

MAIN FRESHWATER FISH

The recipes in this booklet are designed mainly for the three most common species of freshwater fish: Sardine, Tilapia and Nile Perch. Feel free to try them out with any other types of fish from lakes, rivers or from the ocean.

The freshwater sardine is a small silvery fish with a strong taste which is usually sun dried and eaten whole.

It is:
- Very cheap and can be stored for a long time;
- Rich in calcium, potassium and magnesium which are very important for the development of teeth and bones in children and vital for pregnant mothers;
- Rich in vitamin A, D and of the B group vital for the health of all.

Nile Perch is a large fish that can be bought whole, as fillet or steak.

It is:
- Easy to digest, delicate in taste with a firm and flaky texture;
- One of the best sources of Omega3 fats;
- Very versatile, it can be cooked in many different ways.

Tilapia is a good flavored fish, easy to prepare and cook.

It is:
- Rich in protein, vitamins and minerals;
- Low in fat, making it a healthy choice for the sick and elderly with risk of high bloodpressure, high cholesterol or heart diseases;
- An excellent source of vitamin B12, which is very important in our body to help maintain our energy levels.
PRACTICAL TIPS:
CHOOSING AND PREPARING FISH

HOW TO ENSURE SAFE FISH CONSUMPTION

1. Make sure that you buy fish from a clean place and that the seller shows good personal hygiene.

2. Check the quality and make sure you buy good quality fish.

3. Cook your fish soon after you have bought it or keep it chilled using ice until you cook it.

4. Cover the fish to avoid it coming into contact with flies and dirt.

5. Wash the fish before cooking in clean water to remove any dirt or bacteria.

6. Make sure that all utensils like knives and chopping boards are clean and wash them with clean water and soap after every use.

7. Make sure all the ingredients used in cooking are of good quality, fresh and clean.

8. Make sure the fish is well cooked inside (but do not over cook it).

9. The fish should be eaten soon after cooking, while still hot and not left exposed to flies and dirt.
PRACTICAL TIPS:

CHOOSING FISH

HOW TO CHOOSE FRESH FISH

SMELL IT
It should not have a bad smell

OPEN THE GILLS
The gills should be red and clean with almost no slime

SCRATCH THE SCALES
The scales should not be easy to remove from the skin

CHECK THE EYES
The eyes should be firm, clear and sticking out

OBSERVE THE STOMACH
It should not have a sunken, soft and mushy or burst stomach

CHECK THE SKIN
The skin should always be glossy and moist

PRESS THE FLESH WITH A FINGER
The flesh should not be soft and should not leave the mark of your finger where you pressed

CHECK HOW THE SELLER KEEPS THE FISH
The fish should always be kept under the shade and chilled with clean ice in a clean container

DO NOT EAT IT!

EAT IT!
PRACTICAL TIPS: CHOOSING FISH

HOW TO CHOOSE GOOD QUALITY PROCESSED FISH

COLOUR SMELL & APPEARANCE

SMOKED FISH
- Appearance: shiny, no damage, no insects or insect damage
- Smell: smokey
- Colour: brown

SALTED & DRIED FISH
- Appearance: firm when pressed, no damage, no insects
- Smell: not strong
- Colour: white/ yellowish

SUNDRIED LAKE SARDINE
- Appearance: shiny, whole fish
- Smell: no smell
- Colour: silver

FROZEN FISH
- Appearance: hard and still frozen, packaging intact
- Smell: no smell
- Colour: silver

Appearance: dull, broken, mould, insects and insect damage
- Smell: burnt
- Colour: black

Appearance: insects, soft when pressed, pink or brown patches
- Smell: rotten fish
- Colour: dark yellow/ brown

Appearance: soft, wet, damaged packaging
- Smell: off smell
- Colour: yellow/ brown

Cooking Freshwater Fish
PRACTICAL TIPS: PREPARING FISH

HOW TO FILLET A FISH

1. Wash and scrape off all scales with a knife from tail to head, against the lie of scales. Rinse

2. Lay the fish flat on its side. Using a sharp knife, cut across the fish just behind its head

3. Put the knife in just behind the head and cut from behind the head down the backbone towards the tail

4. Peel the flesh back and then cut forward over the rib cage to the head cutting through the small bones

5. Cut through the belly and remove the fillet from the fish

6. Turn the fish over and cut just behind the head

7. Cut from the tail up to the back of the head cutting the flesh away from the back bone

8. Peel the fillet back and cut from the tail to the head and through the rib bone

9. Cut through the belly to remove the fillet

10. Fillets and fish frame
BASIC METHODS OF PRESERVING FISH

HOW TO MAKE GOOD SALTED AND DRIED FISH

Salting is a good way of preserving fish.
If properly packed and kept dry, salted fish will keep in good condition for a long time.
Follow these steps to make good quality salted and dried fish

Ingredients:
Whole, very fresh fish
salt (about 1 kg per fish)

1. Remove the guts from the fish. Splitting the fish is good as it speeds up the salting process. Wash the fish well using clean water;
2. Put a layer of salt over the bottom of a plastic tray or container. Put the fish onto the salt skin side down;
3. Cover the fish with a thin layer of salt;
4. Put another layer of fish on top and cover this with a layer of salt. Keep adding layers of fish and salt like this;
5. The final 3 layers of fish should be put skin side up;
6. When all the fish have been salted then cover the top layer with plenty of salt. Then put a clean wooden board on top and a heavy weight on top of that;
7. Leave the fish to salt for 15 days if the weather is warm. If it is cold then leave it for 21 days;
8. Wash the fish in clean water to remove the salt from the outside of the fish;
9. Lay the fish on drying racks to dry. The fish can also be hung from the tail on racks;
10. Dry the fish in the shade for the first day to stop the outside of the fish drying too quickly and hardening;
11. From the second day onwards place the fish in the sun to dry. Dry it for up to 10 days if the weather is cloudy or 5 days if there is plenty of sun;
12. Keep the fish in a clean, cool place every night;
13. When the fish is dry put it in a large clean container with a layer of salt on the bottom and cover with a lid.
Fish stock is quick and easy to make, and is a really magnificent base for fish soups, rice and a great number of sauces.

**INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE**
- 2 whole fresh fish or salted fish or dried fish or filleting leftovers (bones, head, liver, skin)
- 1 bunch coriander
- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 10 cups of water

**INSTRUCTIONS**
1. Put the water to boil in a pot.
2. Cut the fish in to pieces and add it to the pot.
3. Cut the onions and carrots and add them with a bunch of coriander.
4. Boil over low heat for 45 minutes.
5. Let it cool and sieve out all the bones.
6. Serve as a soup or use for other recipes.
STEAMED FISH

Steaming if done properly is a method of cooking that enhances the natural flavor, the fish remains moist and retains its shape and all nutrients. It’s one of the healthiest ways of cooking fish and it uses no fat, unlike deep-frying.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE
- 2 whole fish or 4 fillets
- 2 lemons
- 1 bunch coriander
- 2 garlic cloves (optional)
- 1 ginger (optional)

Fill the water half way the pot and bring to boil
In a bowl with holes, place lemon slices, a bunch of coriander and the fish
Sprinkle lemon and coriander into the boiling water
Lower in the steamer and cover it tightly with a lid to contain the steam
Cook for around 20 minutes
Chop garlic and ginger and sprinkle on top.
Serve with vegetables: kale, spinach, peas, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, cassava or plantains or use for other recipes
**ROASTED FISH**

**INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE**
- 2 whole fresh tilapia or
- 4 Nile perch steaks

**COOKING TOOLS**
- 4 handful of charcoal
- 1 stove with metal net

**DRESSING**
- 3 spoons of oil
- juice of 2 lemons
- salt and pepper

**SALAD**
- 2 big onions
- 1 bunch of coriander
- 3 big tomatoes

- Gut and clean the fish under clean running water
- Clean the grill, rub it with half onion to prevent the fish from sticking to it
- Cut the skin in various places on each side and rub in little oil and add salt
- Put the fish on the grill already heated and oiled. Turn and let it cook for around 10 min on both sides. The fish is ready when the flesh comes away from the bones easily.
- The dressing: in a small bowl, mix all the dressing ingredients with a fork
- When the fish is cooked, serve on a flat plate, drizzle the dressing on top and chutney on the side
- Serve with cornmeal/ugali and vegetables: kale, spinach, peas, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, cassava or plantains
LAKE SARDINES IN GROUNDNUT SAUCE

INGREDIENTS
FOR 4 PEOPLE

- 2 cups of lake sardines
- salt and pepper
- 2 carrots
- 1 chili pepper
- 3 spoons of cooking oil
- 2 large tomatoes
- 1 large onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 cup of water

GROUND NUT PASTE
Roast then peel a cup of groundnuts. Crush or grind the groundnuts into a powder, add some hot water and mix to make a paste.

Fry the onions and garlic in oil until brown and tender.

Chop onion and garlic and dice the carrots.

Add the tomatoes and carrots.

Add the groundnut paste and water. Make sure to mix regularly to prevent stickiness.

Season with salt, pepper and chili.

Add your fish and let it simmer for 20 minutes.