

# COOKING TIPS

## Broiling

Suggested fish to broil are sword, tuna, mackerel and shark because of their high oil content. Salmon, halibut, haddock, cod & sole, can also be broiled but need to be watched as they are more delicate. Marinating the mild, more delicate fish will help prevent the fish from drying out. Shellfish such as scallops, shrimp, clams, mussels & lobster are great under the broiler too.

Begin by preheating the broiler and adjusting the broiler rack. For thin fillets and small pieces of seafood, move the rack so that it is only about two inches from the heat source. This will allow the seafood to evenly brown before it overcooks or dries. For larger pieces of seafood, move the broiling rack four six inches away from the heat source so that the inside cooks before the outside dries out or becomes tough.

Prepare the seafood as you would for grilling. Either lightly spray it with oil and season with salt and pepper or submerge it in a quick marinade and shake off any excess. Place it skin side down (if there is skin) on a lightly oiled, heat-proof broiling pan or cookie sheet and cook under the heating source using the guidelines above.

Thin, delicate fillets will cook quickly and generally do not have to be turned over. Thicker fillets, steaks and shellfish will need to be turned about half way through cooking to be sure they are evenly cooked through. Estimate that it will take about eight to ten minutes per inch of fish thickness for the meat to reach an internal temperature of 140 degrees. If you find that the seafood is browning too quickly (before the inside cooks through), simply lower the broiling rack away from the heat source.

Broiled seafood will continue cook and its internal temperature will continue to rise a few degrees once it is removed from the heat source. Remove when it is almost cooked through. Finfish will just begin to flake and the color will turn from translucent to almost opaque; shrimp and scallops will feel firm, not mushy when poked with tongs, and the flesh will have just turned opaque; lobster tails will turn a bright, rosy color and the flesh will turn from translucent to opaque.

## Baking

Baking surrounds food with even, dry heat and is a great method for cooking whole fish. Smaller, delicate pieces of fish do not respond as well to baking & require a coating of breadcrumbs, or a splash of broth/oil to keep them moist. Most varieties of shellfish tend to dry out as they cook in the oven unless a combination of cooking techniques is used.

To roast a whole fish, preheat the oven to about 450°. Make a few vertical slashes on each side of a cleaned fish. If desired, soak the fish in a quick marinade; tuck a few herbs, spices, or other flavorings inside; or spray it with a little oil & season w/ salt & pepper. Place the fish on a rimmed cookie sheet or shallow pan. As the fish roasts, baste it w/ the juices that accumulate in the bottom of the pan until the flesh at its thickest point just begins to flake & turns from translucent to opaque. It will take about 8-10 min per inch of thickness to cook through. Rotate the pan about half way through cooking time to cook evenly.

### Baking Used With Other Cooking Techniques

Baking is sometimes combined with other cooking techniques to more evenly and quickly cook food, or to keep baked foods from drying out. The two best examples of this are steaming while baking, or pan searing then baking.

To steam while baking, simply splash your favorite combination of flavorings and a liquid (broth, juices, wine, or water) over seafood in a shallow baking pan. The amount of liquid will vary depending on the amount of seafood you are cooking, but figure that it should cover about a quarter of the seafood. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake in a 425° oven till the seafood has cooked through. Or, prepare foil "packets" by placing seafood on one half of a large piece of foil, adding desired seasonings and a splash of liquid to just moisten the surface of the seafood. Fold the other side of the foil over the seafood. Seal the three sides by folding and crimping the edges to make a "packet." Estimate the cooking time for the packets by using the same eight to ten minutes per inch guideline as explained above; however, add up to two minutes to the final cooking time to account for the heat having to make its way through the foil.

Pan searing then baking allows the surface of the seafood to brown and crisp, while making sure the middle of the seafood cooks through. Begin by heating an oven-proof skillet on the stovetop over med-high heat until warm. Add about a tsp. of oil, swirl the pan to evenly coat and heat until almost smoking. Add the seafood, keeping multiple pieces separated. Do not touch or move the seafood until it is browned on one side. You may have to adjust the heat to so that the seafood browns evenly but does not burn. Carefully flip the seafood and then place in a 425- 450° oven to finish cooking. Cook until the second side is brown, and the thickest part of the seafood is just starting to flake and is almost fully opaque. Rest two minutes and serve.



**7839 Enterprise Dr. Mentor, Ohio 440-951-6448 Toll Free 800-686-0908**  
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\*\*\* Information provided by our partners at National Fisheries Institute\*\*\*

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## Grilling

Grilling gives a smoky flavor and crisped texture to finfish and shellfish. It works best for meatier, firmer-fleshed finfish cut in to steaks or fillets with skin. However, flakier finfish, skinless fillets, and smaller shellfish can be grilled using a grill basket.

Prepare seafood for grilling by very lightly spraying both sides of it with olive oil or vegetable oil. Once oiled, season seafood with salt and pepper. Or, marinate the seafood in your favorite combination of juice, herbs, spices and oils. Shake off excess marinade before grilling to avoid flare-ups.

If using a gas grill, begin by preheating it for at least 10 min on the highest setting with the lid closed. For charcoal grills, allow the fire to burn down so that you can comfortably hold your hand above the coals for only 2-3 seconds. Next, clean the grate by scraping it with a grill brush then wiping it with a wad of paper towels dipped in a light coating of oil (grasp the paper towels with tongs to avoid burning your fingers). Both a very hot grill and a clean grill grate will help prevent seafood from sticking.

Finfish, large shrimp, and scallops may be placed directly on the grill grates and cooked until opaque. Smaller varieties are easier to turn if placed on water-soaked wooden skewers/planks or in a grill basket. Shellfish, including mussels, clams and oysters, may be placed directly on the grill and cooked until their shells open-about five minutes. Discard any that do not open after cooking. With a little more preparation, whole lobsters, lobster tails, king crab and whole crabs may be grilled.

As a general rule, seafood steaks and whole fish will take about 10 minutes to cook for each inch of thickness. Thin fillets will take less time. If fillets have skin, place them skin side down and do not move the fish for at least two minutes to build up a crust that won't stick. If grilling smaller fillets, make a few shallow slashes through the skin, which will keep the fillet from curling as the skin cooks and shrinks.

## Pan Searing

Pan searing is a technique that works well for cooking fish steaks and thicker, shorter fillets of fish. If the fish has skin, score it on the skin side with a few vertical slashes. This will help the fillet from curling because the skin will shrink as it cooks. Dry the fish thoroughly and season with salt and pepper if desired.

Begin by heating a low-sided, well-seasoned skillet on the stovetop over medium-high heat until warm. Add about a teaspoon of oil, swirl the pan to evenly coat it, and heat until almost smoking. Add the seafood, placing the side you wish to present in to the hot pan first. Keep multiple pieces separated. Do not touch or move the seafood until it is browned on one side. You may have to adjust the heat to so that the seafood browns evenly but does not burn. Turn the seafood once it is about halfway cooked through-you can guess the halfway point by looking at the side of the fish, which will appear opaque on the side closest to the bottom of the pan and translucent on the side that is facing up. It may be useful to use two large, flat spatulas to help you flip the fish. Continue cooking on the second side until the fish begins to reach a final cooking temperature of 140 degrees, or the meat just begins to flake and becomes opaque. Remove from the pan, rest two minutes, and serve.

## Steaming

Steaming is a gentle, fat-free cooking method that keeps the natural moisture in foods. This method uses the steam from a simmering liquid to transfer heat to, and cook, a food. It is an excellent choice for preparing delicate seafood because there is a safe distance between the food and heat source, which helps to protect against drying. And steaming keeps flavorful juices and nutrients inside the seafood, rather than letting them escape into the surrounding cooking liquid.

If you do not have your own steamer cooking pot: To make your own steamer, find a deep, wide pot and fill it about two inches full of cooking liquid. Placing a few small, heatproof dishes (ramekins or tea cups) in the bottom of the pot and set a wire rack on top. Tightly cover the pot with a lid and bring the liquid to a simmer. Place the food to be steamed either directly on the rack or on a small plate on top of the rack and cover again. This method works especially well for finfish.

For shellfish, such as clams, mussels crabs and lobster, try a simpler technique. Bring an inch or less of cooking liquid to a boil in a pan with a tightly fitting lid. Add the shellfish, cover and cook until most have opened. Discard any unopened shellfish.

Boost the flavor of steamed seafood by simmering ingredients such as lemon juice, white wine, onions, shallots, spice or herbs in the cooking liquid for a few min before steaming. These ingredients will add a subtle, delicious flavor directly in the fish.



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