



The Ultimate Guide to Cooking Seafood

Take the stress out of planning and preparing family meals! Here are some quick tips to make sure your seafood meals turn out delicious every time. For more tips, visit seafoodnutrition.org/cooking.

THE BEST WAYS TO COOK YOUR SHELLFISH

Often, shellfish are boiled, poached, steamed or even microwaved. They can also be baked, broiled or grilled, as with scallops or shrimp. See the chart below for species-specific recommendations:

IS IT DONE?

- **Raw shrimp:** will turn pink and become firm.
- **Live oysters, clams and mussels:** shells will open when they are done.
- **Shucked oysters, clams and mussels:** will become plump and opaque. The edges of the oysters will start to curl.
- **Scallops:** will turn white or opaque and become firm to the touch.
- **Crab and lobster:** shells will turn bright red and the meat will become white or opaque.

	CLAMS	CRAB	LOBSTER	MUSSELS	OYSTERS	SCALLOPS	SHRIMP
COOKING METHOD	Steam	Steam, boil or buy precooked frozen or canned	Boil, or use precooked frozen	Steam or poach	Steam, roast or poach	Pan-sear, broil or grill	Boil, sauté, grill or use precooked frozen
WAYS TO ENJOY	In risotto or on their own with a squeeze of lemon	In gumbos, as crab cakes, or as a topping on fish, shrimp, or lobster	Over a fresh salad or served with melted butter	Cooked in broth or soup, or on their own with a squeeze of lemon	Grilled or baked, topped with sautéed spinach and garlic	Tossed with pasta	Grilled, in tacos or over pasta

Need a quick recipe? **Many fish dishes can be made in 15 minutes or less.** Plus, if you didn't plan ahead, seafood can be cooked from frozen!

THE BEST WAYS TO COOK YOUR FISH

Fish is versatile and can be paired with a variety of cuisines and flavors. Try a few of our favorite ways to enjoy it!

Fish can be divided into categories based on the amount of fat it contains. Within each category, you can swap types of fish in recipes and cooking techniques.

- **Lean, mild-flavored fish – or “white fish”:** Steaming, poaching or baking is best for these tender pale-flesh species, which include barramundi, cod, flounder, grouper, pollock, red snapper, rockfish, sole or tilapia.
- **Rich-flavored, fatty fish:** Grilling, baking, slow-roasting or broiling all work well with a firmer texture fish that can withstand the heat. Try black cod (sablefish), bluefish, catfish, mackerel, salmon, sardines, swordfish, trout or tuna steaks.

IS IT DONE?

- Many types of fish are delicate and tender, so you want to avoid overcooking them. **The best way to tell if a fish is done is by testing it with a fork. Insert the fork at an angle, at the thickest point, and twist gently. The fish will flake easily when it's done, and it will lose its translucent or raw appearance.**
- If you are new to preparing seafood, try using a food thermometer and cook the fish to an internal temperature of 140° to 145°F.



MASTER THE ART OF FISH COOKING

6 Simple Techniques for the At-Home Cook

BROILING

Get that grilled taste without the grill; cook fish in an oven set to broil, skin side up.

Good for: skin-on fillets or small whole fish

EN PAPILOTTE

Enclose seasoned fillets in parchment, gently roast in oven.

Good for: medium to firm fish

GRILLING

Cook over high heat; brush with oil and cover with herbs and citrus.

Good for: whole fish, skin-on fillets

PAN SEARING

Score fish skin with a few shallow cuts. Cook skin-side down in pan until crispy, then flip.

Good for: skin-on or skinless fillets

POACHING

Gently cook fillets in simmering stock or sauce such as tomato or curry. Submersion is key.

Good for: lean, flaky fish

ROASTING

Cook thawed or frozen fillets in a 400°F oven (375°F for whole fish)

Good for: medium to fatty fish

HOW TO DEFROST FROZEN FISH

Let the fish thaw slowly in the refrigerator overnight on paper towels. In a rush? Submerge it in its vacuum packaging or a water-tight bag in cold water for 15-20 minutes.

GOOD RULE OF THUMB

Try the 10-minute rule, which says you should measure the fish at its thickest point, and cook it on medium for 10 minutes per inch, turning halfway through the cooking time.

That means a **thin fish like sole or perch cooks in about 4-5 minutes** while a **thicker salmon or tuna steak might be closer to 15-20 minutes.**