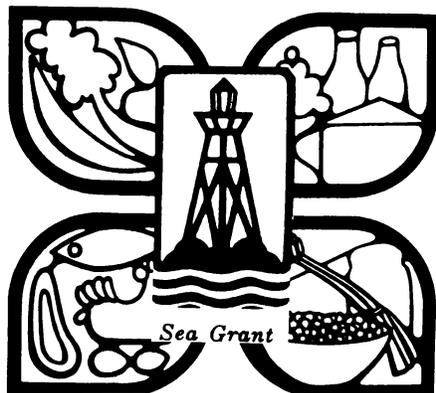


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FOODS AND NUTRITION

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FREEZING FISH

Fresh fish spoils easily. Store in the coldest part of the refrigerator and use within two days. If you want to keep the fish longer, freeze it.

TO FREEZE FISH

Clean and dress the fish before freezing. This will save time when you are ready to cook the fish and will save freezer space as well.

Wash the dressed fish thoroughly in cold water before wrapping.

Freeze in amounts equal to what you will use for one meal.

Choose an airtight packaging material such as plastic wrap. Start with a piece large enough to allow you to use a double thickness and to lap the edges and fold up the ends. Press the packaging material against the fish to force as much air out of the package as possible. It's impossible to press the air out of a rigid container such as a milk carton or plastic box so add water to force out the air.

Write the kind of fish and the date on the package. That way you'll know what you have in the freezer.

Use "fat" fish within three months for best results. "Lean" fish will keep longer but are best if used within 6 months.

Spread the packages of fish out in a single layer in freezer so they'll freeze faster. Once they are frozen, they can be stacked to take up less space.

BUYING FROZEN FISH

If you do your fishing in the frozen food section of the supermarket, here are some buying tips for you.

1. The fish should be solidly frozen "hard-as-a-rock."
2. The flesh should have a firm, glossy appearance with no white spots, papery corners or edges, dark spots, or discoloration.
3. The package should be intact with no torn or crushed edges.
4. There should be no evidence of frost inside clear packages and no indication of drip or ice on the outside packaging. These are signs that the fish has been mishandled in storage (allowed to thaw and refreeze) or that it has been stored too long.

THAWING FROZEN FISH

The bacteria that cause fish to spoil are not killed by freezing. The extreme cold in the freezer keeps them from causing the fish to spoil. When the fish thaws, the bacteria can start to work again. That's why it is important to thaw fish in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Never thaw fish at room temperature. Leave the fish in its package for thawing. It will take 18-24 hours to thaw a pound of fish in the refrigerator or about an hour under cold running water. Thin, flat packages will thaw quicker than bigger, bulkier packages.

Use thawed fish as soon as possible -- within 24 hours after thawing.

It is better not to refreeze fish.

