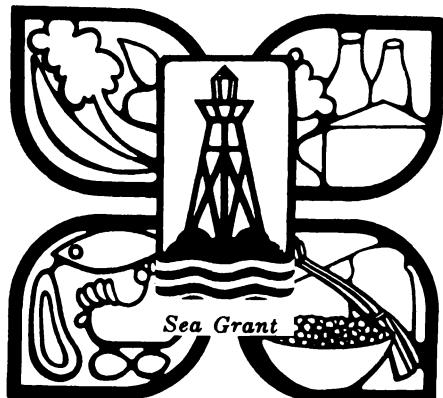


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FRYING FISH

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

Frying is probably the most popular method for cooking fish and seafood. Frying is a method of cooking in hot fat. Fish may be panfried using a small amount of fat or fried in deep fat.

Choose a cooking oil or hydrogenated vegetable shortening for frying rather than butter, margarine, or lard. The cooking oils and shortenings stand up better at the high temperatures used for frying.

Fry fish at about 350° F. If the temperature is lower than this, the fish will absorb too much fat and will be greasy. If the temperature is too high, the outside of the fish will brown before the center is done. Electric skillets and deep fat fryers have temperature controls which you can set at 350° F. If you fry in a regular skillet, heat oil or shortening over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Drop in a 1-inch square of bread to test temperature. It should become golden brown in 60 seconds.

PAN-FRYING

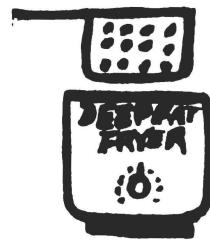
1. Dip clean, dressed fish or fish pieces into milk or beaten egg.
2. Then roll in cracker crumbs, cornmeal, flour or other breading mixture.
3. Place the breaded fish in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before frying. This will make the breading stay on better.
4. Heat about 1/8" oil or shortening in a heavy skillet to 350° F.
5. Place one layer of breaded fish in the skillet and fry until brown on one side, then turn over and brown the other side. Don't put too many pieces in at one time as this will cause the fat to cool too much.
6. Cook 8 to 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the piece. It is done when the flesh flakes easily with a fork.
7. Lay fish on paper toweling to remove excess fat.
8. If you add more fat, let it reach 350° F. before you add fish.

OVEN-FRYING

Oven-frying is not really a frying method but may be a convenient way to prepare a large quantity of fish. For oven-frying, cut the fish into serving-size pieces, dip in salted milk (1 tsp. salt to ½ cup milk), and coat with browned, fine, dry crumbs. Place the breaded fish skin side down in a shallow, well-greased baking pan. Pour about ¼ cup melted fat or oil over the fish. Bake in an extremely hot oven preheated to 500-550° F. for 10 to 15 minutes.

DEEP-FAT FRYING

1. Put enough shortening or oil into a deep-fat fryer or heavy, deep saucepan to fill it about half way. There needs to be enough fat to allow the fish to float but there also needs to be room for the fat to bubble up.
2. Heat the fat to 350° F.
3. Dip the clean, dressed fish or fish pieces into milk or beaten egg, then roll in cracker crumbs, cornmeal, flour or other breading material. Or dip the fish in batter.
4. Place a single layer of fish in the hot fry basket or drop pieces into hot fat. A fry basket makes it easier to get the pieces of fish in and out of the hot fat.
5. Lower the basket slowly into the hot fat. Cook fish until done, usually 3 to 5 minutes. The fat will boil up when you put the fish in. The outside should be golden brown, the inside should flake easily when tested with a fork.
6. Drain fish on paper towel to remove excess fat.
7. Keep fish warm in the oven (150° F.) until you have completed frying all of the fish.



CARE OF SHORTENING

Shortening or oil used for deep-fat frying can be reused if it is properly cared for. First of all, don't let the fat get too hot during cooking.

Turn off the heat or set the pan off the heat as soon as you are finished frying. Let the fat or oil cool to room temperature.

Strain to remove food particles and pour into a clean container for storage. Don't mix it with unused fat. A paper towel, a piece of cheesecloth, or an old tea towel may be used inside a strainer or funnel to remove particles. Most of the food particles will settle to the bottom so you can get rid of them by carefully pouring the oil or shortening off the top.

Store the used shortening or oil in a covered container in a cool dark place or in the refrigerator.