

Assignment #5

Seafood

Cul 500-5035

Bobbi Jo Garcia

Mount San Jacinto College

Seafood is a broad culinary term that includes shellfish and fish. Seafood is highly valued for its delicate flavor, nutritional content, and versatility in cooking. The basic structure and composition of fish is water, protein, fat, and vitamins and minerals. There are round fish, flat fish, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish. There are also shellfish included in seafood. In the following paragraphs we will look at each type of fish and cooking methods that fit each category of fish.

First we will look at roundfish. Roundfish have a cylindrical body and an eye on each side of the head. They are symmetrical on both sides with ribs that attach to the spine. Their backbone runs along the top of the fish. They swim upright and produce two fillets per fish. Their flesh can be lean or fatty. A few examples of roundfish include salmon, cod, and tuna. The best cooking methods for lean roundfish are poaching, steaming, or baking. Due to this type of lean fish lacking fat moist-heat cooking is the most ideal. There are also fatty round fish that require high heat methods such as pan-searing, roasting, broiling, and grilling.

Flat fish have a compressed body with both eyes on one side. They are generally bottom-dwelling by design. They lie flat on one side and produce four fillets. They also have a delicate, mild flavor. They tend to be more complex in the filleting process. Flounder, halibut, and sole are examples of flat fish. The best cooking methods for these fish are sauteing, pan-frying, poaching, and steaming. These methods are best due to the finer texture and thinner fillets.

Freshwater fish are fish that live in rivers, lakes, or streams. They have a mild flavor, softer texture, and if not handled and cleaned improperly can have a muddy taste. These fish include bass, catfish, and trout. The best cooking methods include pan-frying, deep-frying, grilling, and smoking. These methods work best to help enhance the flavor and improve the texture of the fish.

Saltwater fish live in the ocean and sea. They have a more pronounced flavor, often having a firmer flesh, and can include both oily and lean varieties. Snapper, tuna, and mackerel are included in the saltwater classification. Grilling, broiling, baking/roasting, and poaching work best with these fish because they have a firmer texture and can withstand the high heat without falling apart.

Shellfish are divided into two main categories. They are mollusks and crustaceans. Mollusks include clams, oysters, and scallops. Crustaceans include lobster, shrimp, and crab. Mollusks are generally cooked by steaming, boiling, baking, and grilling. Crustaceans are generally cooked using steaming, grilling, sauteing, and boiling.

Seafood grading and quality is less standardized, but based on quality factors which include freshness, texture, odor, color, handling and storage conditions. The U.S.D.A. provides voluntary grading for some seafood products. Grade A is the highest quality in appearance and texture. Grade B has minor defects and a good quality. Grade C is the lowest quality and is used for processed foods. HACCP also enforces seafood safety through monitoring contamination risks and

ensuring safe handling and storage. Some of the general storage principles include keeping seafood cold at all times, temperature controlled between 32°F-38°F, and ideally kept on crushed ice in a container that allows drainage. Seafood can also be frozen, which will allow it to last longer. It is important to note that proper thawing techniques must be followed to ensure the seafood does not spoil.

When cooking seafood one needs to understand the group of fish it belongs to, in order to prepare properly. Seafood is generally a very delicate item and can be overcooked very easily. Understanding between all the different types of fish and their structures allows proper fabrication and aid in what pairs the best with each type of fish. By selecting the proper cooking method assists to the optimal texture and taste. For a chef to master seafood they must use a combination of knowledge, skill, and attention to detail.

References

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