

Straight from the Oven – Baked Fresh Fish and Shellfish

One of the best and easiest ways to cook fish or shellfish is just to slide it in the oven and bake it. Fillets, steaks, dressed fish and shellfish can all be baked. Baking uses dry heat and may require some basting. Lean fish like tuna and mahi-mahi need to be basted once or twice. Fatty fish like catfish and bluefish need less, if any basting.

You don't even have to use a recipe. Just brush fillets with melted margarine or butter, or use olive or vegetable oil. Top the fish lightly with your favorite seasonings, and bake. For added flavor, place the fish on a bed of vegetables such as thinly sliced celery with carrots and onions.



Baked fish can be simple or fancy. A golden-browned, baked fish is notable for its simplicity. It can also be dressed up with a topping of sauce or vegetables. Fillets also can be rolled up, stuffed and baked. Or you can put stuffing on the flesh side, and then place another fillet on top, flesh side down. This creates boneless stuffed fish.

There is no need to turn fish when baking since it is surrounded by heat. You can marinate your fish before baking. Or you can use rubs made with herbs and spices. For those who prefer a more flavorful taste, try baking fish with the head on; it is always more flavorful and healthy too!

Baked the fish at 450 F or higher. Cooking at lower temperatures for a longer time dries seafood. Small, thin pieces should be cooked at higher temperatures, 425 to 450 F, so that they will not dry out. Larger pieces should be cooked more slowly at a lower temperature so that the exterior will not be done before the inside is cooked. Fish should reach an internal temperature of 145 F for 15 seconds.

From *Mariner's Menu: 30 Years of Fresh Seafood Ideas*

Contributed by David Green