The Guide's Forecast – Technical Report Series

Technical Report #20- The Guide's Forecast's Favorite Salmon/Steelhead & Sturgeon Recipes

Introduction

Hopefully, ***The Guide's Forecast*** has helped you in your pursuit of your favorite Northwest sportfish. Now let us help you enjoy it to its highest potential! When I had first started fishing, I had no interest in fish what-so-ever. I was in it for the trophy aspect. One of the largest steelhead I ever caught (15-lb. Salmon River summer-run) was cut into steaks and put in my Mom and Dad's freezer until it burned so bad, I had to throw it out. Now days, fish doesn't last long in my house. I tagged 56 salmon, 10 sturgeon and 3 halibut in the 2001 season and you will not find any of this fish in my freezer by early February.

To enjoy a great meal, you must prepare for it. This technical report will take you through the most important steps for processing your catch from the net to the dinner plate. One of the best perks of my job is the meal benefits and although my favorite recipes will be listed in this report, we hope you will submit your favorites for all to enjoy!

Preparation/processing

When your catch first hits the deck, the work really begins. You want to start by being careful in how you dispatch your catch. Too many people swing their bats at flopping fish hitting them in the shoulder or on the side badly bruising the meat. If the blow is placed properly, one hit should be all it takes so place your swing right on top of the head between the eyes. The longer your fish suffers on deck, the more lactic acid builds up causing muscle tissue to become tough. Once you have your salmon or steelhead in the "lying still" position, immediately take it to a place where you can bleed it without making a mess. The fish box is where I head!

You should act quickly in cutting across the gills while the heart is still pumping blood. Cut across the gill arches and blood should start squirting out with each heart beat. This ensures the most blood will leave the fish keeping the flesh firm and cool. Rinse the blood from the fish box if you have this capability and keep them cool until you can fillet the catch. For sturgeon, ropes are typically employed to string the fish to the side of the boat. About a half-hour before I go in, I cut the gills to bleed the fish out in the water. This procedure is critical if you want a quality fillet! With your fish safely stored, keep the boat at half throttle for the ride home so you don't unintentionally tenderize your fish into mush!

When filleting or steaking, keep the fillet table free of as much slime and blood as possible. The more blood you incorporate into your fish fillets, the more water you will

have to use to rinse it out causing your fish's flesh to soften as well. With fillets in hand, pack them on ice but be sure to keep the fillets out of any water for the ride home. If at all possible, keep the ice from direct contact with the fish. This can cause the flesh to soften as well.

When you get home and decide what you are going to do with all the fish you have be sure to eat as much as you can fresh and I strongly recommend vacuum packing the rest. As far as vacuum packers go, anglers may want to really consider the cost/benefit of a vacuum packer. I have two of them which I am not impressed with either. I often opt to have my catch commercially vacuum packed as the commercial machines do a much better job at preservation than the cheaper consumer styles. Obviously the more your pay, the better the machine should be. The good ones cost about $3000.00! Good vacuum packed fish lasts for several months in the freezer.

The sooner you eat it however, the better it will taste. I usually just smoke my frozen fish cutting out any freezer burned areas before I smoke it. The slime and the fish oils is what gives fish flesh that "fishy" taste so get as much slime off as possible before freezing. Also, consider what species you are freezing. For example, spring chinook is so oily, it is best left to canning. Sturgeon is the same way, especially after a good winter of feeding on smelt! Coho freezes well as it is usually leaner than most chinook.

When you go to thaw fish for preparation, use the slow thaw process whenever possible. Take your fish out of the freezer a day in advance and put it in the refrigerator to thaw slowly. This will help the flesh maintain its firmness. And let's cook!

Salmon & Steelhead Recipes

Easy BBQ

Cut fillet into desired serving size Place skin side down on tin foil

Coat fillet with either:

KC Masterpiece BBQ sauce
Thinly sliced onions (walla walla sweets if possible)
Fresh ground pepper
OR
A thin layer of mayonnaise
Thinly sliced onions (walla walla sweets if possible)
Fresh ground pepper
Fresh or jarred chopped basil leaves

Grill fish just until it starts to flake. The tail piece will cook fastest as it is the thinnest. You may want to serve this section first.

Baked salmon in sour cream

One 3 or 4 pound piece of salmon
One dried onion
One pint of sour cream

Place fish in foil in baking pan.
Slice onion and place in fish cavity
Salt and pepper
Seal foil around fish and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.
Take out of oven, open foil, pour sour cream over fish, return to oven and bake 20 min. longer.
Larger pieces of fish may take longer so check to see if fish flakes apart easily.

Salmon Loaf

Two pints canned salmon, drained
2 eggs, whipped
One cup seasoned bread of cracker crumbs
½ Onion minced
¼ cup flour
2 tbs. Lemon juice

Mix all ingredients together.
Put in loaf pan.
Bake at 350 degrees until knife comes clean when inserted in center (approx. 45 min.)

Salmon Patties

1 pint canned salmon, plain or smoked
½ cup flour
½ cup crushed crackers
1 egg

Drain fish. Mix flour, cracker crumbs, and egg with salmon
Form into patties.
Lightly sauté in oil until brown.
Serve with your favorite sauce.

Salmon Noodle Supreme

4 ½ cups wide egg noodles uncooked
1 pint canned salmon, drained and flaked
1 cup sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
½ cup milk

1 tsp. Dijon Mustard
2 tbs. Lemon juice
2 cups small fresh broccoli flourettes
1/3 cup red pepper, chopped
¼ cup green onion, sliced

Heat oven to 350 degrees
Cook pasta and drain.
In a large bowl stir together sour cream, mayonnaise, parmesan cheese, milk and mustard
Add hot pasta, salmon, broccoli, red peppers and onions.
Stir until evenly blended.
Place in 2 qt. Baking dish, cover, and bake 40 to 45 min. or until hot and bubbly.

Salmon Noodle Casserole

2 pints canned salmon, drained and flaked
4 hard boiled eggs, sliced
1 cup frozen peas
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 soup can of milk
1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
1 tbs. Lemon juice
2 tbs. Chopped onion
1 bag of crushed potato chips

Prepare noodles
Combine all ingredients except potato chips
Place in oven proof casserole dish
Sprinkle crushed potato chips over top
Bake 45 to 60 min. at 350 degrees until brown and bubbly.

Oregon Fish Balls

1 cup cooked fish (salmon, sturgeon, shad)
1 cup leftover mashed potatoes and vegetables
1 egg beaten
1 tsp. butter
1/8 tsp. pepper
salt

Deep hot fat at 390 degrees

Combine fish with vegetables
Add the beaten egg, butter, and salt

Drop mixture from tablespoon into hot oil
Cook until golden brown
Drain on paper towels
Garnish with parsley and cut lemon

Salmon Party Tray

1 pint canned salmon
1 8oz block of cream cheese
¾ cup bottled seafood cocktail sauce, or sweet and sour sauce, or salsa

Place creamed cheese in a shallow bowl
Drain salmon well and break up into chunks
Place salmon on creamed cheese
Pour your chosen sauce on top
Serve with crackers, chips, or tortilla chips

Herb Broiled Fish

4 6oz Salmon or Steelhead steaks (or 4 trout)
1/3 cup melted butter
1 1tbs grated onion
3 tbs. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. marjoram
1 tbs. chives
2 tbs. parsley

Preheat broiler
Grease broiler pan lightly
Mix all ingredients except for fish
Spread half of mixture on fish steaks or trout sides and interior body
Place fish 5 to 6 inches under broiler
Broil 6 minutes and turn over
Spread with remaining sauce
Broil 8 minutes or until it is flaky

Dill Salmon Pie

1 cup sour cream
½ tsp. dried dill weed
½ tsp. dried dill weed (again)
1 cup canned salmon, drained
1 ½ cups milk
1 tbs. lemon juice

3 eggs
¾ cup biscuit mix (Bisquick etc.)
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

Mix sour cream and ½ tsp. dried dill weed cover and refrigerate
Heat oven to 400 degrees
Grease a 9 or 10 inch pie pan
Sprinkle salmon and remaining dill weed in bottom of pie pan
Beat remaining ingredients for one minute with a whisk or 15 seconds in a blender
Pour beaten mixture over salmon in pie pan
Bake until knife inserted comes out clean - 30 to 35 minutes
Cool 5 minutes before serving

Creamed Salmon

2 cups milk
¼ cup butter or margarine
¼ cup flour
¼ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
1 to 2 tbs. lemon juice
1 pint salmon, drained
¼ onion minced fine

Sauté onion in butter until soft
Blend in flour and seasonings until bubbly
Add milk, stirring constantly
Bring to a boil and boil for one minute
Add salmon and lemon juice
Heat until fish is hot - do not stir too much, it will break up the fish
To add color put ¼ cup frozen peas in before adding fish
Can serve over toast or rice

Rice Stuffed Salmon

½ cup diced onion
½ cup diced green bell pepper
½ cup diced celery
4 cloves of garlic, minced
3 tbs. butter
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
2 cups cooked with or brown rice
½ cup sliced olives
½ coup fresh parsley

2 tsp. dried basil
1 6 to 8 pound salmon, head removed
1 lemon thinly sliced

Sauté onion, green pepper, celery and garlic in butter for 3 minutes
Add mushrooms and sauté for another 2 minutes
Add vegetables to rice
Add olives, parsley and basil
Place salmon on aluminum foil
Stuff with rice mixture and lemon slices
Wrap fish securely in aluminum foil
Poke hoes in foil with fork
Grill over medium coals for about 1 hour until fish flakes with a fork or
Bake in a 450 degree oven, 10 minutes per inch of thickness (at the thickest part of the fish)

Grilled Soy Salmon

2 pounds salmon fillets
1 cup soy sauce
Lemon Pepper to taste
2 tbs. butter, melted

Place fillets in a shallow dish and add soy sauce
Refrigerate for 1 hour, turning fillets several times
Remove fish from dish and pat dry
Place on hot grill
Sprinkle with lemon pepper and brush with butter
Grill for 7 to 10 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily with a fork

Broiled Trout

¼ cup butter
1 tbs. lemon juice
2 tsp. salt
½ tsp. paprika
¼ tsp. pepper
4 10oz trout, dressed
Parsley
Lemon wedges

Preheat broiler and line pan with foil
Melt butter in saucepan
Stir in lemon juice, salt, paprika, and pepper
Simmer for 1 minute and remove from heat
Arrange trout on pan, brush with half the butter mixture

Broil trout 3 inches from broiler for 6 minutes and turn
Brush with remaining butter mixture and broil for another 7 minutes or until flaky
Serve with parsley and lemon wedges

Sturgeon Recipes

Simple sturgeon BBQ

Cut your sturgeon fillet into small chunks (approx. 3" X 3")
Soak in Charlie's marinade of equal parts of:
Soy sauce
Brown sugar
Olive oil
And a little less than an equal part of sake (Japanese rice wine)
*Add more of the necessary ingredients to make the flavor favorable to your taste.

Make just enough marinade to cover the amount you are going to grill in a bowl and
place in the refrigerator for 4 to 12 hours (the longer, the better).

Start the BBQ hot until you are ready to place the sturgeon on the grill. Spray the chunks with olive oil before placing them on the grill. Just after searing the sturgeon chunks, turn the heat to medium and flip the pieces once or twice until the chunks just start to cook through. Do NOT overcook!

AN ADDED TWIST:

To make delicious sturgeon bento, cut the chunks into smaller pieces to put on a skewer with onions, green and red peppers and mushrooms. Grill for a short time until the fish is cooked through. Make lots of extra marinade for additional sauce at serving time. You will NOT want to use the marinade you put the sturgeon pieces in for a serving sauce. Cook a large pot of white rice and serve the fish and vegetables over the rice with a serving of bento sauce.

Pan Fried sturgeon

1 cup of milk
1 egg
1 cup of instant potato buds

1 cup of bisquick
salt and pepper

Mix milk and egg together
Mix potato buds and bisquick together
Dip pieces of fish in milk and egg
Roll in potato mix
Place in hot fry pan and cook through

Poor Man's Lobster

Cut pieces of fish into ½ cubes

½ cup salt
½ cup sugar
1 qt. Water
2 qt. pot

combine salt and sugar in pot with 1 qt. water
bring mixture to a hard boil
drop pieces of fish into boiling water

The fish will sink at first and then float to the top (about 10 – 30 seconds depending on
How many pieces of fish you use at once).
After fish floats to the top, time for an additional 30 seconds. Use a strainer to remove
Fish from the boiling water.

Use your choice of dipping sauce:
Melted butter
Cocktail sauce
Tarter sauce

Sturgeon Party Cheese Ball

1 pint canned or smoked sturgeon
8 oz cream cheese
1 tbs. lemon juice
1 package of dried vegetable soup mix
1 tsp. liquid smoke seasoning
½ cup chopped nuts
3 tbs. chopped parsley

Drain and flake canned sturgeon or mince smoked sturgeon
Whip cream cheese, lemon juice and liquid smoke together

Add vegetable soup mix and fish
Form into a ball and roll in nuts and parsley
Chill for at least two hours before serving
Serve as a spread or with crackers

Smoked Sturgeon Chip Dip

2 cups smoked sturgeon
8 oz cream cheese
½ pint sour cream
¼ cup chopped green onion
2 tsp. lemon juice

Mince sturgeon in a food processor
Add all other ingredients and blend
Serve with chips or crackers

Sturgeon Fillet Stuffed with Crab

1 lb. sturgeon cut into ¼ pound fillets
½ cup white wine
1 tbs. dried thyme leaves
6 oz Dungeness crab meat
3 oz chive cream cheese at room temperature
6 tbs. freshly squeezed lemon juice
Lemon pepper to taste

Split each fillet lengthwise to form a pocket for stuffing
In a small, shallow dish, combine wine and thyme
Add fillets and marinate for two hours in refrigerator
Preheat oven to 425 degrees
Combine crab and chive cream cheese until well blended
Stuff fillet pockets with cream cheese/crab mix
Place fillets on a lightly buttered baking dish
Drizzle lemon juice over each fillet and sprinkle with lemon pepper
Bake 20 minutes or until fish is cooked to desired doneness

Baked Sturgeon Columbia

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets
1 cup ketchup
2-½ tsp. prepared mustard
½ cup white wine
½ cup green pepper
½ tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce

¼ cup chives
2 tsp. sugar
¼ cup vinegar
½ cup chopped sweet pickles
1 tsp. melted butter

Mix all ingredients and pour over sturgeon in a greased baking dish
Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until done

Sour Cream Sturgeon

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets
1 cup sour cream
¼ cup finely chopped onion
1 tbs. white vinegar
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. celery salt
1/8 tsp. Tabasco Sauce

Mix all ingredients and spread over sturgeon in a greased baking dish
Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until done

Mayonnaise Baked Sturgeon

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets
½ cup mayonnaise
½ cup finely chopped onion
½ tsp. sweet basil
½ tsp. dry mustard
2 tbs. vinegar
½ tsp. salt

Mix all ingredients and spread over sturgeon in a greased baking dish
Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until done

Broiled Sturgeon

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets
¼ cup butter or margarine
1 tbs. lemon juice
2 tsp. salt
½ tsp. paprika
¼ tsp. pepper
Parsley
Lemon Wedges

Preheat broiler
Melt butter in a small sauce pan, stir in lemon juice, salt, paprika, and pepper.
Simmer for 1 minute
Arrange fillets on foil lined broiler pan
Brush fillets with ½ of butter mixture
Broil 3 inches from heat for 6 minutes
Turn over and brush fillets with other half of butter mixture
Broil 7 more minutes or until fish flakes easily
Garnish with parsley and lemon wedges

Honey Broiled Sturgeon

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets
4 tbs. honey
2 tsp. Dijon mustard or other brown mustard

Mix honey and mustard
Arrange fillets on foil lined broiler pan
Brush fillets with ½ of butter mixture
Broil 3 inches from heat for 6 minutes
Turn over and brush fillets with other half of butter mixture
Broil 7 more minutes or until fish flakes easily

Dill Butter Broiled Sturgeon

1 lb. sturgeon fillets
4 tbs. butter or margarine
1 tbs. lemon juice
1 tsp. dill seed
1 tsp. fresh chives
1 pinch black pepper

Combine ingredients and let stand for four or more hours
Spread butter mixture on fillets
Arrange fillets on foil lined broiler pan
Broil 3 inches from heat for 6 minutes
Turn over and brush fillets with other half of butter mixture
Broil 7 more minutes or until fish flakes easily

Sturgeon Stir-fry

2 tbs. soy sauce
2 tbs. rice wine or sherry
1 tbs. honey
2 tbs. vegetable oil (divided)

½ tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
1 lb. sturgeon fillets cut into ½ inch strips
¼ lb. Chinese pea pods
2 tbs. water
¼ lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced
2 green onions, thinly sliced
½ pint cherry tomatoes
1 5 oz. can water-chestnuts, sliced

In a large wok or heave fry pan combine soy sauce, rice wine, honey, 1 tbs. of oil and Chinese five-spice power.
Heat and add sliced sturgeon
Stir-fry for 1.5 to 2 minutes until heated through
Remove sturgeon from pan, place in a bowl and cover
Add the other tbs. of oil to the pan and heat
Add remaining ingredients and stir-fry for 2 minutes until vegetables are tender
Add fish to pan to heat
Serve over hot white rice

Sturgeon Stew

2 lbs. sturgeon fillets cut into 1 inch squares
3 tbs. vegetable oil
2 small onions, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 medium garlic clove, minced
2 tbs. flour
½ cup tomato sauce
1 tsp. Tabasco Sauce
1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
1½ cup water
salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large pan
Add onion, green pepper, celery and garlic
Sauté until soft, 4-5 minutes
Add flour, tomato sauce, seasonings, water and sturgeon
Simmer over low heat for 30 minutes
Serve over hot rice

Smoking fish

Before you begin to smoke your fish, whether it is salmon or sturgeon, you need to make sure of 2 things: 1) You are happy with the way the

brine tastes **before** you put the fish pieces in it and 2) You know how moist or dry you want your fish to come out of the smoker.

My brine is really simple. You just have to know how much to make for the amount of fish you are smoking. I buy the 2 main ingredients in BULK:

Lots of soy sauce and lots of brown sugar! That's it! Combine the two in large quantities and make sure it is favorable to your palette. After you have the right proportions, add lots of garlic and ginger to the mix. I have gone to chopping up to a whole head of garlic in the food processor and half a root of ginger before adding it to my bowl of brine. Again, season to taste.

I place my fish in a large stainless steel bowl covering it with plastic wrap and placing it in the refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours. When the brining is complete, take the fish pieces out of the brine and place them on the smoking racks to dry over the sink for 1 to 2 hours. This will prevent the sticky mixture from dripping onto your drip pan in mass quantity causing the sugar to burn and leave a bad taste on your smoked fish.

Place the racks into the smoker and check the chips frequently. I change my chips every 45 to 60 minutes when the pan of chips burns to black. Everyone's burner heats differently but the more frequently that you change the chips, the more smoky flavor will be incorporated into your fish.

This is the part where you need to KNOW YOUR SMOKER! My fish only smokes for 3.5 to 4.5 hours. I smoke my fish just until it cooks through. Most times when I remove fish from the smoker and break it apart it is still quite moist and almost doesn't seem cooked enough. Well, I have learned that it is indeed cooked enough and it DOES dry out when it goes into the refrigerator for keeping. If you continue to smoke it past the "just cooked through" stage, plan on having a dryer smoked fish- which some people prefer.

Your smoked fish will last several days- even a week in the refrigerator before you have to worry about it going bad. The moister the fish, the sooner it will go bad. If you plan on freezing smoked fish, also plan on a drier than you may like end-product. I always consume or give away freshly smoked fish- none of it goes into the freezer. I recommend if you want smoked fish when they are not in season, freeze fish **for** smoking. Don't smoke fish for freezing.