



TAKE ME FISHING™

Ways to Store Fish

Keep a fish alive or chilled from the time it is caught until it can be stored. Clean it as soon as possible to preserve its flavor. However, a fish can be kept for up to a day before cleaning if it is iced or chilled. After a fish is cleaned and skinned, filleted, or steaked, there are several ways to store it.

Icing

After a fish is dressed you can ice it. This is the best way to transport fish. Use an insulated cooler and leave the cooler's drain plug open so ice water will run out. Water spoils the flavor of the fish.

Refrigeration

Before refrigerating a fish, wash it in cold water and dry it with a clean cloth or paper towel. Then wrap it in waxed paper, plastic wrap, or aluminum foil and store on ice or in the refrigerator. Usually, you can store a fish in the refrigerator for up to two days. Large fish or large pieces of fish will keep longer than small pieces. Lean fish (panfish and walleye) store better than fatty fish (trout).

Freezing

Frozen fish last from three to twelve months. However, the preparation for freezing is important. A fish can lose its flavor if it comes in contact with air. One way to prevent this is to wrap the fish in aluminum foil. Then, wrap it again with freezer paper.

Another way is to freeze the fish in a solid block of ice. Use a refrigerator container. Place the fish into the container, but use enough water to just cover the fish.

To thaw a frozen fish, put it in the refrigerator overnight or place the wrapped fish in cold water. Do not try to thaw fish in a microwave because part of the fish will begin to cook before other parts are thawed. Don't thaw fish at room temperature.

Other Ways to Store Fish

Smoking, pickling, and canning are other ways to store or prepare fish. Look for recipes in cookbooks or your public library.