



# SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

## Fish and Shellfish

**Background:** There are over 500 species of fish and shellfish commercially available in the United States today. They are marketed fresh, frozen, canned, dried, slated, smoked and in many convenience forms.

Fresh and frozen fish are marketed in various forms. These are the most common: whole, drawn, dressed, fillets, butterfly, steaks, chunks, raw breaded fish portions, fried fish portions and canned.

**Nutrition Value:** The consumption of fish (finfish and shellfish) has risen dramatically within the last decade, primarily because consumers are aware that fish is one of the most nutritious foods.

Fish is a complete protein. Most species have 17 to 20 percent protein. Fishery products are a good source of many vitamins, especially niacin, B6 and B12. Fish, particularly shellfish, is known for its mineral content, with certain species having substantial amounts of calcium, iron, copper, chromium and/or zinc and other trace minerals. Shellfish are higher in sodium.

The fat content of fish can range from as low as 1.6g in ocean perch to 8.6g in salmon per 3.5 ounces portion of uncooked seafood and averages about two grams of fat. Many fish contain omega-3 fatty acids. The cholesterol content average about 60 mg. Most shellfish have moderate levels of cholesterol. Shrimp and squid are higher in cholesterol.

**Signs of Freshness:** *Fresh Finfish.* Good quality fresh (unfrozen) finfish have the following characteristics:

- The flesh is firm, springs back when pressed gently.
- The odor is fresh and mild.
- The eyes are bright, clear and often protruding.

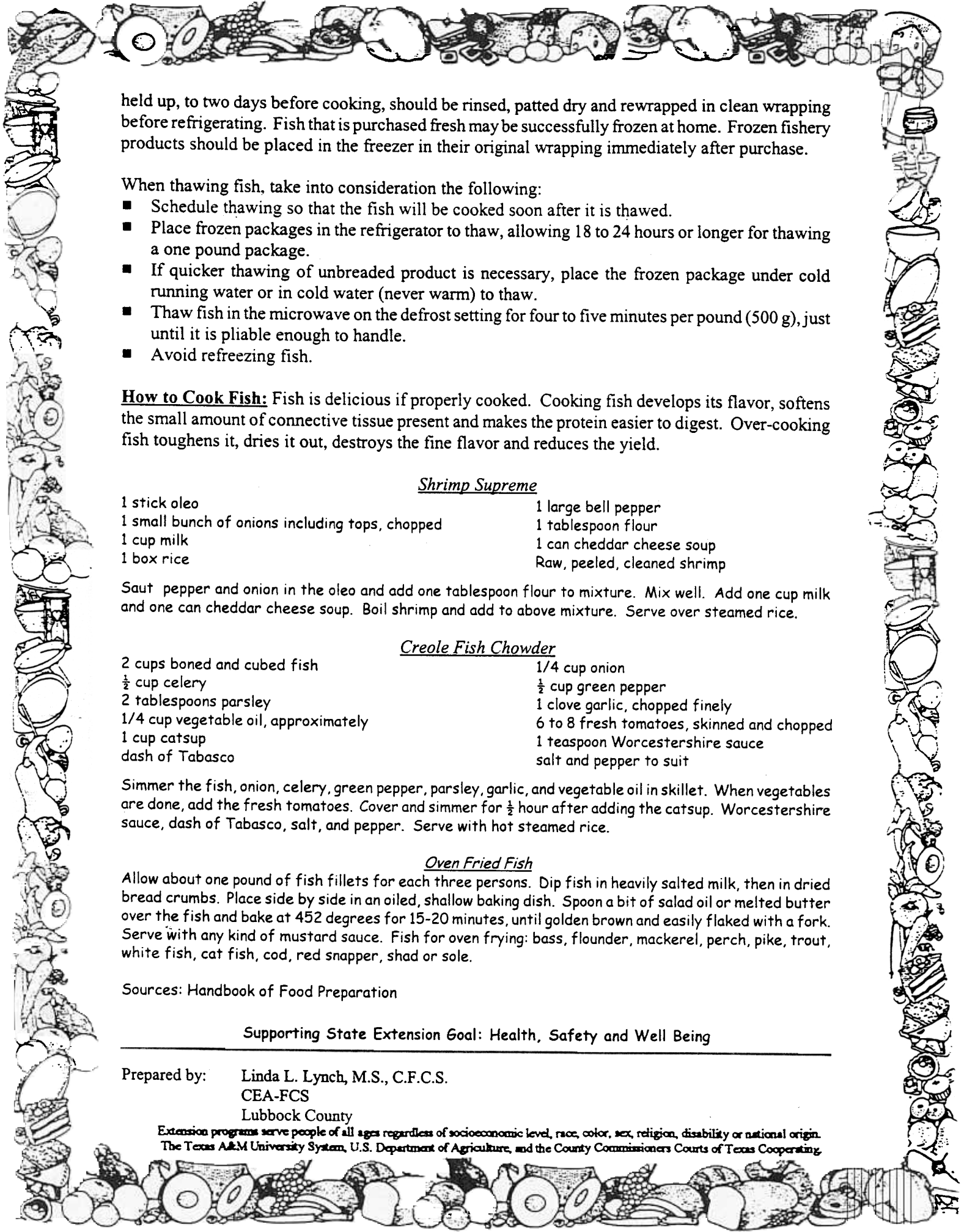
*Fresh Shellfish:* Look for these signs of freshness when buying fresh (unfrozen) shellfish:

- The odor is fresh and mild.
- Oysters, clams and mussels in the shell are alive, as indicated by a tightly closed shell or one that closes upon handling.
- Fresh shucked oysters are in a clear, slightly milky or light gray liquid, called liquor.
- Crab meat has a fresh, mild odor.

*Frozen Fish:* Frozen fish of good quality have the following characteristics:

- The fish is solidly frozen when purchased.
- The flesh has no discoloration or freezer burn (a dry, white or grayish "cottony" appearance).
- The fish has little or no odor. When thawed, it has a mild odor.

**Storing and Thawing:** Fresh fishery products that are to be cooked the day of purchase should be stored immediately in the coldest part of the refrigerator in the original wrapper. Fish that is to be



held up, to two days before cooking, should be rinsed, patted dry and rewrapped in clean wrapping before refrigerating. Fish that is purchased fresh may be successfully frozen at home. Frozen fishery products should be placed in the freezer in their original wrapping immediately after purchase.

When thawing fish, take into consideration the following:

- Schedule thawing so that the fish will be cooked soon after it is thawed.
- Place frozen packages in the refrigerator to thaw, allowing 18 to 24 hours or longer for thawing a one pound package.
- If quicker thawing of unbreaded product is necessary, place the frozen package under cold running water or in cold water (never warm) to thaw.
- Thaw fish in the microwave on the defrost setting for four to five minutes per pound (500 g), just until it is pliable enough to handle.
- Avoid refreezing fish.

**How to Cook Fish:** Fish is delicious if properly cooked. Cooking fish develops its flavor, softens the small amount of connective tissue present and makes the protein easier to digest. Over-cooking fish toughens it, dries it out, destroys the fine flavor and reduces the yield.

#### Shrimp Supreme

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 stick oleo                                    | 1 large bell pepper         |
| 1 small bunch of onions including tops, chopped | 1 tablespoon flour          |
| 1 cup milk                                      | 1 can cheddar cheese soup   |
| 1 box rice                                      | Raw, peeled, cleaned shrimp |

Saut pepper and onion in the oleo and add one tablespoon flour to mixture. Mix well. Add one cup milk and one can cheddar cheese soup. Boil shrimp and add to above mixture. Serve over steamed rice.

#### Creole Fish Chowder

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups boned and cubed fish          | 1/4 cup onion                              |
| 1/2 cup celery                       | 1/2 cup green pepper                       |
| 2 tablespoons parsley                | 1 clove garlic, chopped finely             |
| 1/4 cup vegetable oil, approximately | 6 to 8 fresh tomatoes, skinned and chopped |
| 1 cup catsup                         | 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce            |
| dash of Tabasco                      | salt and pepper to suit                    |

Simmer the fish, onion, celery, green pepper, parsley, garlic, and vegetable oil in skillet. When vegetables are done, add the fresh tomatoes. Cover and simmer for 1/2 hour after adding the catsup. Worcestershire sauce, dash of Tabasco, salt, and pepper. Serve with hot steamed rice.

#### Oven Fried Fish

Allow about one pound of fish fillets for each three persons. Dip fish in heavily salted milk, then in dried bread crumbs. Place side by side in an oiled, shallow baking dish. Spoon a bit of salad oil or melted butter over the fish and bake at 452 degrees for 15-20 minutes, until golden brown and easily flaked with a fork. Serve with any kind of mustard sauce. Fish for oven frying: bass, flounder, mackerel, perch, pike, trout, white fish, cat fish, cod, red snapper, shad or sole.

Sources: Handbook of Food Preparation

Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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