

*Preparing Seafood - Thaw It Safely*

Thaw frozen seafood gradually by placing it in the refrigerator overnight. If you have to thaw seafood quickly, either seal it in a plastic bag and immerse it in cold water, or - if the food will be cooked immediately thereafter - microwave it on the "defrost" setting and stop the defrost cycle while the fish is still icy but pliable.

*Prevent Cross-Contamination*

When you're preparing fresh or thawed seafood, it's important to prevent bacteria from the raw seafood from spreading to ready-to-eat food. Take these steps to avoid cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after handling any raw food.
- Wash the cutting board with soap and hot water to remove food particles and juices after using it for raw foods such as seafood, and before using the board for cooked or ready-to-eat foods or preparing another food item.
- As an added precaution, sanitize cutting boards by rinsing them in a solution made of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water - or run the plastic board through the wash cycle in your automatic dishwasher. Or, consider using one cutting board only for raw foods and another only for ready-to-eat foods such as bread, fresh fruit and vegetables, and cooked fish.
- As a rule of thumb, avoid using cutting boards that are made of soft, porous materials. Instead, choose those made of hard maple or plastic, and make sure they are free of cracks and crevices. Smooth surfaces can be cleaned more easily and thoroughly.

*Cook It Properly*

Most seafood should be cooked to an internal temperature of 145 °F. But if you don't have a food thermometer, there are other ways to determine whether seafood is done.

- Slip the point of a sharp knife into the flesh and pull it aside. The flesh should be opaque and separate easily. If you cooked the fish in the microwave, check it in more than one spot to help ensure doneness..

*Serving Seafood - Don't Cross-Contaminate*

Cross-contamination can happen once your seafood is cooked, too. Here are simple ways to keep your seafood safe when serving:

- Place cooked seafood on a clean plate for serving. If cooked foods are placed on an unwashed plate that previously held raw seafood, bacteria from the raw food could contaminate the cooked seafood.
- Use clean utensils to serve food - not those used in preparation of the raw food..

*Temperature Counts*

Follow these serving guidelines once your seafood is cooked and ready to be enjoyed.

- Never leave seafood or other perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours - or, for more than 1 hour when temperatures are above 90 °F. Bacteria that can cause illness grow quickly at warm temperatures (temperatures between 40 °F and 140 °F).
- Carry picnic seafood in a cooler with a cold pack or ice. When possible, put the cooler in the shade. Keep the lid closed as much of the time as you can.
- When it's party time, keep hot seafood hot and cold seafood cold:
- Divide hot party dishes containing seafood into smaller serving platters. Keep platters refrigerated until time to reheat them for serving.
- Keep cold seafood on ice or serve it throughout the gathering from platters kept in the refrigerator.

*May Contain Bones*

Our Yellow Perch are carefully filleted, by hand, with great pride. We take every measure to make sure your fillets are the best we can produce. You should be aware, however, that on rare occasion fish fillets may contain bones.

*Information Source*

Information reprinted from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration - <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/>

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