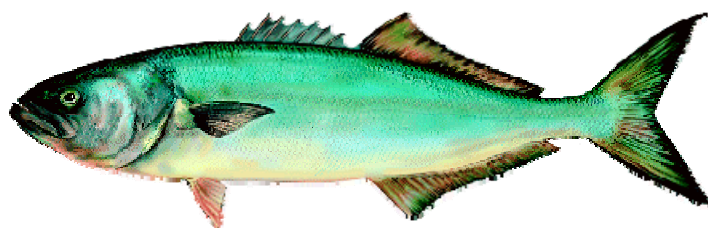


Florida Food Fare

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Bluefish

Description: The bluefish - *Pomatomus saltatrix* – is a wide ranging pelagic species that travels in large schools, feeding on the smaller schooling fish. In the warmer weather the bluefish is one of the most common inhabitants of the inshore and near coast waters. Bluefish are commonly found in the estuaries and the coastal waters of every state from Maine to Florida. It is a favorite hard-biting sport fish and also an important commercial species. They range in size from small "snappers" of under a pound in weight to giant "slammers" weighing up to twenty pounds and more. The average size for Florida bluefish is about three pounds and a large fish may go six pounds. Bluefish have an elongated, compressed body with a sturdy head and two dorsal fins. The first is low and the second is long. It is gray-green on the back and silver on sides and belly. The fins are light green with yellow tints. Bluefish have a strong flavor but are eaten by many who like stronger testing fish.

Availability: Found throughout the Gulf Coast but more frequent along the Florida coasts and in the Atlantic. The larger bluefish are also popular for fishing off the New Jersey and Cape Cod shores. While available year round, it is best from late spring through fall when it is in migratory patterns up and down the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts.

Selection and Care: Bluefish has a high oil content which will turn the fish rancid if not iced down immediately after caught. The meat of a bluefish is light in color and turns white after cooking. Florida bluefish are said to be oilier and darker than those caught in the New England waters. Like mullet, they are best when cooked as fresh as possible.

Freezing: They can be fresh frozen with some success using the ice block method, which prevents oxidation of the fat molecules. This means freezing the fish in a container filled with ice, which will freeze the fish in a block of ice. After the ice block is solidly frozen it can be removed from the container and stored in a large plastic freezer bag or wrapped in freezer paper. Some fat globules may come to be flesh surface when thawed but it can be wiped off before cooking to prevent a spotting appearance.

Nutritional Value: High in Omega-3 fatty acids, bluefish are “heart healthy.” One portion (3 ½ oz) of cooked bluefish contains: 159 calories, 27.7 g protein, 5.44 g total fat, 1.24 g saturated fat, 1.61 g Omega-3 fatty acids, 76 mg cholesterol, 62.6 g water, 138 RE vitamin A, 477 mg potassium, 271 mg phosphorus and 77 mg sodium.

Use & Preparation: Bluefish is excellent when grilled, sautéed or baked. If you have a large quantity of bluefish it is best to cook it all while fresh, then warm it in the microwave for future servings, use cold in a fish salad or add it to a fish or seafood soup.

Recipes:

Baked Bluefish

3-pounds bluefish, clean, heads & tails on	1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh dill
1 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup fresh basil leaves coarse chop
1 teaspoon ground pepper, or to taste	1 cup fresh parsley coarse chop
2 large carrots, sliced thin	1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
1 large onion, chopped	1 cup chicken broth
5 ribs celery, sliced thin	¼ cup lemon juice

Sprinkle bluefish inside and out with salt and pepper. In a large bowl combine well carrots, onion, celery, dill, basil, and parsley. Spoon three-fourths of stuffing into fish, reshape fish, pressing them closed, and arrange them cut sides down in a baking dish just large enough to hold them. Arrange remaining stuffing around fish; pour butter, chicken broth and lemon juice over fish.

Bake fish in middle of preheated 350 degrees F. oven for 35 minutes or until they just flake. Transfer them carefully with spatulas to a platter, and spoon the stuffing around them.

Broiled Bluefish

6 bluefish fillets	1 onion diced
4 cloves garlic, chopped	Tarragon leaves

1/4 cup low fat mayonnaise
1 lemon

1/2 bunch parsley, chopped
Other fresh herbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Rub fillets with chopped garlic and place on lightly greased baking dish skin side down. Lightly coat with mayonnaise, lemon juice, pepper, diced onion, tarragon, fresh herbs of your liking. Place in preheated oven for 7 - 12 minutes depending on thickness of fillet.

Honey Mustard Barbecued Bluefish

4 6-oz bluefish fillets, skin on	1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 Tablespoon fresh mixed herbs, chop	2 tablespoons orange juice
1/4 cup honey mustard (or 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard & 1 tablespoon honey)	1 teaspoon Cajun Seasoning Canola or peanut oil as needed

Rinse fillets and pat dry with paper towels. Prepare a charcoal or gas grill and heat to medium. Mix honey mustard, seasoning, Worcestershire sauce and orange juice in a small bowl. When fire is hot, coat non-skin side of bluefish with oil and grill, covered, for 8 minutes. Coat skin side with oil and flip over. Top cooked side with honey mustard mixture and cook an additional 5 minutes. Remove from grill and serve. Serves 4.

Favorite Fish Salad

A good way to use leftover fish

2 cups cooked, flaked bluefish	1 cup chopped Florida celery
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted	1/4 teaspoon curry powder
1 cup seedless red grapes, halved	1/2 cup low fat mayonnaise
1/4 teaspoon salt	Florida leaf lettuce

Gently combine all ingredients except lettuce. Serve on leaf lettuce. Yield: 4 servings.