

L. J. Case

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## PRESERVING FISH IN THE HOME

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From most standpoints fish may be regarded as interchangeable with meats, therefore it is well for the housewife who lives near streams or the seashore to preserve fish at home. Fish may be bought when cheap and preserved for use in seasons of the year when the price is high.

### PRESERVATION BY SALTING

**Receptacles.** A barrel, keg, firkin, if not made of resinous wood, or an earthen crock will do. Iron or tin is not desirable to use owing to the liability to rust. There should be a tight-fitting cover for the container.

**Kind of Salt.** Medium coarse salt is the best, but any salt may be used. One pound of salt to a gallon container is a good proportion to use.

**Preparation of Fish.** Clean the fish in the same manner as for cooking. They should be laid in salted water and the blood removed from the backbone or portions of it which remain. If too large to go into the container cut into proper lengths. Small, slender fishes, like the smelt, which need not be split, should be cleaned by drawing the viscera out of the body cavity as the head is severed, or along with the gills if the head is allowed to remain.

**Salting.** After the fish have been prepared as above place a layer of salt on the bottom of the container, and on this spread a layer of fish, one deep, skin side down, tail or narrow end toward the center of the container; cover these with a layer of salt and add another layer of fish, repeating the process until the jar is full. If there is not enough fish to fill the container at once, follow the same process with other fish, adding from time to time until the receptacle is full. Place a board on top of the fish, weighting it down so the brine will cover it. When full the vessel should be tightly covered. Should the brine evaporate replace with a brine made by dissolving two and one-half pounds of salt in one gallon of water.

A recommended method for pickling fish is to use two parts of salt and one part of brown sugar.

## PRESERVATION BY DRYING

**To Dry Fish.** They should be prepared and salted as above. If the fish are large let them remain in salt 48 hours; medium-sized fish will require 36 hours and small fish 24 hours. Remove from bone and string them on a cord or dry on racks in the sunshine. It is impracticable to dry fish where the humidity is high.

## PRESERVATION BY SMOKING

Prepare and salt fish as above. The degree of saltness and intensity of the smoking process determine the length of time for which they may be kept. For early use fish may be kept in salt only over night and be smoked lightly.

**Kinds of Fuel.** Green woods such as hickory, maple, ash, and willow are best; corncobs are excellent. Hardwood sawdust is also good. Avoid resinous woods.

**To Smoke.** Start a slow wood fire and fill the smokehouse with smoke. Increase the heat until the fish are partly cooked, then lessen the heat but keep the house full of dense smoke until the fish are properly cured. It will take from six hours to thirty-six hours, depending on size of the fish.

## PRESERVATION BY CANNING

**To Can Smelt.** If it desired to can smelt with the heads on, clean them by cutting the inner or red gills and drawing out the unedible portions with the gills. Wash thoroughly and allow to stand in strong salt water for one-half hour. Another method is to cut off the heads, open the body, and take out the entrails. Pack the raw fish in sterile glass jars. For each pint jar add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful of salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water, put on sterile tops, and place on rack in boiler. Cover with water and cook for  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours after boiling begins. If pressure cooker is used cook for 1 hour at 15 pounds pressure.

It takes approximately 2 pounds of smelt for a pint jar.

**Smelt Canned in Oil.** Any good oil may be used. Pack the cleaned raw fish in jars and to each pint add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of oil blended with one teaspoonful of prepared mustard and one slice of chopped onion. Put lids on can and sterilize.

**Smelt Canned in Mustard or Catsup.** Pack the fish in a jar, alternating a layer of fish and a layer of mustard which has been thinned with oil, or a layer of fish and a layer of catsup. Put lids on cans and sterilize.

## SMELT PASTE FOR SANDWICHES

Fry smelt until brown, then remove the backbone. Add thick tomato puree in which have been cooked onion and parsley to taste, and pack the jar with a layer of fish and a layer of this heavy sauce. Sterilize. Spices, mustard, cayenne pepper, or tabasco sauce may be added if desired.

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Note: This material has been assembled from Government bulletins and experimental work in our laboratories.