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Iowa Fish Seek Favor

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Iowa Fish

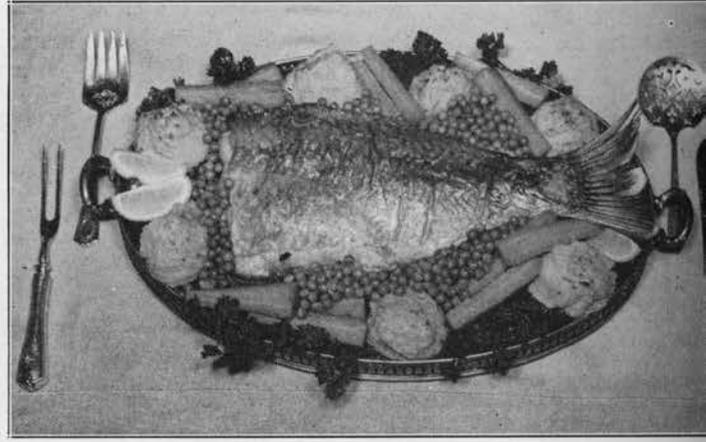
Seek Favor

In a reprint from The Iowa Conservationist, Anna Olsen encourages the increased use of common midwestern fish in the daily diet

HOW many Iowans eat the 30 or more different kinds of freshwater food fish that are native to this region? There is a need for pioneering with native fish in every section of the country. Iowa's buffalo fish, carp and sheepshead fall into the group of neglected home fish, but there is nothing new about them. All three types have strong nomadic traits and have immigrated to inland waters. The carp, a delicacy in China and northern Europe for centuries, were planted in Iowa in 1876 and quickly found their way into all state waters. The freshwater sheepshead followed the streams of the Hudson Bay drainage system and they have established themselves in most of the larger streams and lakes of the Midwest.

Iowa's boundary rivers with their tributaries and the large and small lakes within the state yield about 3,500,000 pounds of commercial food fish per year. Only a small amount of Iowa's commercial fish is sold in local markets; the bulk is shipped to Chicago and eastern markets, where the fish are in demand and bring reasonable returns. An active and persistent demand for Iowa fish will make it profitable for commercial fishermen to market more of their catches at home. Nutritionally, fish deserve a more prominent place in the American diet. All food fish are excellent

Boiling freshwater fish for a short period of time will preserve its natural flavor and develop a moist, tender product which may be served in many ways



Plentiful in Iowa streams is buffalo fish or carp served here with lemon, steamed peas and carrots

sources of animal protein; in quality of protein they are on par with meats, poultry and game.

Size and age are factors that modify the quality and flavor of the fish. Medium buffalo fish and carp weighing from 3 to 6 pounds are preferable to the small variety weighing approximately 2 pounds, or the jumbo fish weighing 10 pounds or more. They have smaller flakes and are sweeter and more delicately flavored than the large fish. They are similar to the cod in flavor and size of flakes. In the small carp and buffalo fish the nuisance bones are more difficult to remove. The small sheepshead are finer grained and more flavorful than the larger fish which often have a shark-like flavor and are unpleasantly tough.

No food responds more satisfactorily to proper cooking than fish. Fish are tender protein foods that should neither be cooked at too high a temperature nor overcooked. Fish are best when cooked just long enough to flake the flesh and to separate it easily from the large bones; at this stage the natural flavor of the fish is developed or preserved and the flesh is tender and moist. The buffalo fish, sheepshead and carp can be fried, broiled, baked, planked, boiled, steamed or braised.

By skillful handling, the flavor of fish may be enhanced, subdued or partly disguised. Experimenting with seasonings, condiments, spices, herbs and vegetables may pay big dividends.

Fish offers a greater variety of flavors than any other type of animal food. That fishy odor which is objectionable to many is not apparent in fresh fish. Those who have reveled in fish fries and fish bakes on the river banks can vouch for these claims.

The Iowa State Conservation Commission assures fishermen that their sizable annual catch of non-game fish can be increased without endangering the supply. The removal of these fish would have a beneficial effect on Iowa's prized game fish coveted by anglers.

Compared with other nations the people of the United States are poor fish eaters. Americans average little more than one-fourth of a pound of fish per week. In New England, only 10 out of their 80 or more different kinds of edible fish and shellfish are eaten extensively by the New Englanders.