

# Catfish Stars As Entree

By ELLY

Catfish are frontswimmers in aquaculture for a variety of reasons — including their adaptability to commercial farming, their efficient feed conversion ratio, and their tastiness.

The channel cat, for example, uses only two pounds of feed to produce one pound of fish, a feed conversion ratio far ahead of cattle and other livestock.

"Cats" are also an easy crop to raise, compared with some livestock. Farmers can raise the fish from brood stock or buy fingerlings.

The fish require six feedings a week during the summer, fewer feedings in cold weather. Cats reach edible size in about 18 months.

The cats' good points seem to be obvious to Southern farmers. Catfish feeding ponds have flooded the Southland in the past decade or so. Starting with a modest 400 acres in Arkansas in 1960, they now cover an estimated 50,000 or more acres in seven states reaching from Texas to Georgia.

Aquafarmers produced 50 million pounds of catfish (liveweight) in 1971, triple the 1969 figure.

At \$1.19 a pound, 149 out of 150 supermarket customers passed them by. At 79 cents a pound, three out of every 150 customers bought them.

The economists base their opinions on a 1972 test in six supermarkets in the Atlanta, Ga. area. Atlanta is considered a relatively "good" catfish market.

Catfish won't supplant beef on the nation's dinner tables soon. But the Atlanta test did indicate that potential supermarket sales, even at the \$1.19 per pound price, could total as much as 109-million pounds, processed weight. That translates into 188 mil-

lion pounds, farm weight.

According to Neil Fogle's article in the mid-summer issue of Michigan Natural Resources, local fishermen should have no worries about the \$1.19 a pound price tag.

Fogle says the catfish is found in abundance in this state. At least 13 species of the channel cat are represented in Michigan waters.

He also offers several recipes as "samples of what this tasty fish can do for your dinner table."

**NEW ORLEANS CATFISH**  
 2 lbs. catfish steaks  
 ½ t. salt  
 dash pepper  
 2 c. cooked rice  
 2 T. grated onion  
 ½ t. curry powder  
 6 thin lemon slices  
 ¼ c. butter or margarine  
 Chopped parsley

Cut catfish steaks into serving size portions and place in well-greased baking dish, 13-9x2". Sprinkle fish with salt and pepper. Combine rice, onion, and curry powder; spread over fish. Top with lemon slices and dot with butter. Cover. Bake in moderate oven, 350 degrees F for 25-35 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove cover the last few minutes of cooking to allow for slight browning. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.



CATFISH CAN BE ELEGANT when served with a sauce and garnished with watercress and paprika-edged lemon slices. A dry white wine and a tossed salad of mid-summer vegetables complement the tasty fish.

**FRIED CATFISH**  
 6" skinned (approx. 1 lb. each) pan-dressed catfish  
 2 t. salt  
 ¼ t. pepper  
 2 eggs  
 2 T. milk  
 2 c. cornmeal

Sprinkle both sides of fish with salt and pepper. Beat eggs lightly and blend with milk. Dip fish in egg mixture and roll in cornmeal. Fish may then be fried at a moderate heat in a fry pan that contains 1/8 inch cooking oil, or they may be deep fried. Brown well on both sides. Serve plain or with a sauce. Serves six.

**BAYOU CATFISH**  
 6 catfish (approx. 1 lb. each)  
 1 c. dry white wine  
 ½ c. melted fat or oil  
 1 can (4 oz.) mushroom pieces and stems, drained  
 ¼ c. chopped green onions  
 2 T. lemon juice  
 2 t. salt  
 ¼ t. crushed bay leaves  
 ¼ t. pepper  
 ¼ t. thyme

Clean, wash, and dry fish. Cut six squares of heavy-duty aluminum foil, 18 inches each, and grease lightly. Place each fish on one-half of each square. Combine remaining ingredients. Pour sauce over fish using approximately 1/3 cup for each fish. Fold other half of fish and seal edges by making folds in foil. Place packages of fish on a barbecue grill approximately six inches from moderately hot coals. Cook 20-25 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with fork. To serve, cut top of each package and fold back. Serves six.

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## What's Cooking

By LARRY TRIMM

Bell peppers have joined Michigan's parade of fresh vegetables as late summer harvesting continues throughout the state.

Berrien, Van Buren, Monroe and Wayne counties are the primary sites for this colorful commercial crop. Michigan had a million dollar bell pepper crop in 1972 and placed sixth in the nation in total production, according to marketing officials of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

You may be more familiar with bell peppers when called sweet green peppers or vegetable peppers. The terms are used interchangeably, depending upon what part of the country you're from. Bell peppers are a warm season crop, grown on well-drained mineral soil.

Quality peppers are medium to dark green in color with a glossy sheen, relatively heavy weight, with firm sides. Fully mature peppers of the same type are bright red in color.

If unaccustomed to red bell peppers, you might imagine them to be hot but actually they're as sweet and mild as green peppers, though not available in all markets.

Need more vitamin C? Eat plenty of fresh peppers. Nutritionists say they're among the richest sources. Most frequent uses are raw and cooked minced in other foods to add color and flavor. But you can stuff, bake or cut them into strips and pan fry. Peppers can also be frozen for winter use.

Wash peppers, remove

seeds and chop to freeze for uncooked foods. Place in a plastic bag or freezer container and seal. If freezing whole, halves, strips or rings, blanch first by placing in boiling water for a few minutes. Drain and cool before stuffing into freezer containers.

Try packing green peppers in the morning and allow them to set in the refrigerator for several hours while seasonings permeate the lining.

For quick meals, steam peppers for 10 to 15 minutes and stuff with any hot creamed vegetable or meat dish. Sprinkle the top with cheese and paprika and heat in oven for 10 minutes.

## Rose Petal Jam: A New Version

Here's a cooking idea for rose petals from your garden. Use them to add color, fragrance and taste to your version of a jam.

"Use only petals in fullest essence," says Jane Windeler of Drayton Plains, co-chairwoman of Oakland University's Meadow Brook Hall flower arranging committee.

Mrs. Windeler, who devised this new jam, adapted it from the recipe for Violet Jam in "Stalking the Wild Herbs" by Euell Gibbons.

**MEADOW BROOK HALL ROSE PETAL JAM**  
 1 c. firmly packed rose petals  
 ¼ c. water  
 2 T. lemon juice  
 2 c. sugar  
 1 pkg. powdered pectin  
 ¼ c. water

Using a blender, blend rose petals, ¾ cups water and lemon juice, using ½ cup rose petals at a time.

Add sugar, adding one cup at a time.

Mix pectin and ¼ cups water in saucepan; bring to a boil and boil hard for one minute. Add blended mix. Put in a closed container. Refrigerate or freeze. Makes about four small jars. Keeps for six months.

"All the staff like our new jam so much. We are considering it on the breakfast 'sweets' selection for residential conferees," said Margaret Twyman, manager of Meadow Brook Hall.

"Visitors touring Meadow Brook Hall on Saturday and Sunday afternoons are welcome to pick a few petals from the hall's lovely rose garden to add to those from their own garden."

## Smoked Catfish

6 (¼-lb. each) skinned, pan-dressed catfish or other small fish  
 1 gallon water  
 1 c. salt  
 ½ c. beer  
 ½ c. prepared mustard  
 2 finely minced garlic cloves  
 ½ t. Worcestershire sauce  
 ¼ t. liquid hot pepper sauce  
 ¼ c. sesame seeds, toasted  
 2 T. chopped parsley  
 Paprika

Thaw fish if frozen. Clean and wash fish. Add salt to water and stir until dissolved. Pour brine over fish and let stand for 30 minutes. Remove fish from brine and dry. Combine beer, mustard, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, hot liquid pepper, ¼ cup sesame seeds and parsley. Dip fish in mustard sauce and sprinkle with remaining sesame seeds and paprika. Place on well-greased grill inside smoke oven. Cook in a very slow oven, 250 degrees, for one hour or until fish flakes easily when tested with fork. Serve with hushpuppies. Makes six servings.

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