

How To Cook Fish on the Stovetop

I would place "How to Quickly Cook Fish Fillets" right up there with other essential cooking skills like boiling eggs and cooking a pot of rice. If you can cook a fish fillet, you can have a healthy, easy dinner on the table in 10 minutes. Or less! It's such a simple and versatile weeknight meal. Here's how to do it.



Which Fish Is Best?

- ☐ For quick stovetop cooking, go for a white fish fillet. For today's tutorial, we used tilapia, but any lean white fish can be cooked with this stovetop technique: tilapia, cod, bass, grouper, haddock, catfish, and snapper. If you're in doubt, just tell the fish seller how you're planning to cook the fish and ask them which fish they recommend.

How Much Fish?

- ☐ One 6- to 8-ounce fillet per person is plenty. You can cook as many fillets at a single time as will fit in your pan without crowding.

What Kind of Pan Should I Use?

- ☐ This is one instance where I often turn to a non-stick skillet. It makes this already-easy cooking process even easier, and I don't get as worried about the fish sticking to the pan and tearing.
- ☐ However, the advantage of a cast-iron skillet or stainless steel skillet is that the fish tends to get a little more golden and crispy, which I love. If you use one of these skillets, use a dab more oil than you might otherwise to help keep the fish from sticking.
- ☐ All this said, just use the pan you have and feel most comfortable with. This fish is meant to be an easy weeknight meal, not something fancy, so it doesn't need to look perfect! Don't stress too much if the fish flakes apart as you flip it or if you leave little bits behind (think of these bits as fish cracklin's!).

What Can I Do Next?

- ☐ Once you've mastered this basic technique, it's yours to play with! You can brush the fillets with a glaze, coat them in crispy bread crumbs, or serve them with a simple sauce. There are a few more variations listed below.

What You Need

Ingredients

- ☐ 1 6- to 8-ounce white fish fillet per person, such as tilapia (pictured), cod, bass, grouper, haddock, catfish or snapper, Salt, Pepper 2 tablespoons olive oil or butte,r To serve: lemon wedges, minced herbs, capers, etc.

Equipment

- ☐ Skillet, non-stick, cast-iron, or stainless steel, Fish spatula or other thin spatula, for flipping

Instructions

- ☐ 1. **Pat the fish dry.** Use a paper towel to pat the fish dry on both sides.
- ☐ 2. **Sprinkle with salt and pepper.** Sprinkle the top of the fish generously with salt and pepper.
- ☐ 3. **Warm the oil in the skillet:** Warm the olive oil or butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. The pan is ready when a flick of water sizzles on contact with the pan.
- ☐ 4. **Lay the fish in the hot pan** Lay the fish, seasoned-side down, in the pan.
- ☐ 5. **Cook for 2 to 3 minutes** Cook the fish for 2 to 3 minutes without moving it. When ready to flip, the underside should look golden and crispy. It should also release fairly easily from the pan using a fish spatula. (Not a problem in an non-stick skillet!)
- ☐ 6. **Season the other side of the fish** While the first side cooks, season the other side with salt and pepper.
- ☐ 7. **Flip the fish and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes** Flip the fish to the second side and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes. When ready, the fish will be opaque all the way through and flake apart easily.
- ☐ 8. **Serve immediately:** Serve the fish while still hot from the pan with any finishing garnishes. White fish can often be very flaky after cooking; don't worry if it flakes apart a bit as you serve it.

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