



By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Lake whitefish are one type of freshwater trout, an offshoot of the salmon family. It's hard to think of whitefish as salmon because they lack the typical pink flesh color and distinctive salmon flavor. Ocean crustaceans, the source of orange pigment that make salmon pink, are missing from the diet of lake whitefish. Yet they are a good source of the highly regarded omega-3 fatty acids just like their salmon cousins.

The deep and cold northern waters of the largest freshwater lake system in the world is the natural habitat for lake whitefish. Reputable sellers use the label: "Wild Caught from the Great Lakes, Product of U.S.A." Farmed whitefish are an aquaculture product in Michigan and are labeled "fresh whitefish."

Fresh lake whitefish are available in summer months, but most abundant in the fall. Your best bet is to buy directly from a fishmonger or to [shop at specialty markets](#) where reputable retailers bring whitefish directly from northern Michigan. Here's a freshness checklist: skin is silvery and shiny; gills are red; flesh is firm and springs back when gently pressed; and aroma is clean-smelling and mild, not disagreeable or strong

An option to fresh whitefish is vacuum packed frozen lake whitefish, [known to retain fresh-like flavor and texture](#). Also popular are smoked whitefish, a delightfully unique product with many culinary uses. Fresh, frozen, or smoked, look for the USDA-required country of origin label.

Whitefish average 1 ½ to 4 pounds, the perfect size for a portion or two. Buy only the amount of fresh whitefish that you can use within 2 days. If you're not cooking it right away, wrap it in plastic wrap and store on ice in the refrigerator.

With a sweet, light flavor, whitefish is adaptable to most any fish recipe. This month, the recipe by Chef Rajeev features a baked preparation you're sure to enjoy.

# RECIPE for health

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featured food:

**WHITEFISH**

## Pistachio-Crusted Whitefish

By Executive Sous Chef Rajeev Patgaonkar, MSU Kellogg Center

Serves 4

- 1 c. dry breadcrumbs
- 6 T. shelled pistachios, lightly toasted
- 2 T. packed fresh parsley
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 4 skinless Great Lakes whitefish fillets (3 oz. each)
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. ground black pepper
- 1/4 c. nonfat plain (unsweetened) yogurt

Heat oven to 400°F.

Pulse breadcrumbs, pistachios, parsley, and garlic powder in food processor until nuts are roughly chopped. Pour breadcrumb/pistachio mixture onto parchment paper.

Season whitefish fillets with salt and pepper. Coat tops of the fillets with yogurt. Sprinkle breadcrumb/pistachio mixture on top of the yogurt and press firmly.

Place fillets, breadcrumb/pistachio-side up, on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake in hot oven until fish is no longer translucent in the center, about 10 minutes. Finish under the broiler until breadcrumb/pistachio mixture is browned, about 2 minutes.

Serve with Citrus Spinach Salad

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