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Measured against their perch family cousin the walleye, yellow perch are small fries, 4 to 10 inches in length and weighing ¼ to ½ pound. Also called perch or lake perch, adding color to their name makes it aptly descriptive of this yellow-bodied fish with prominent dark vertical stripes. They travel in schools and move shoreward each morning and evening. This feeding pattern and the fact that they will bite on just about anything makes them the most frequently caught game fish in Michigan.

If you're not fishing, just buying, check out farmers markets in Meridian Township, East Lansing, and Flint for yellow perch transported fresh from Michigan's Upper Peninsula. There are 8 to 12 single fillets per pound. They appear translucent, not white or cloudy, and not fishy smelling. Keep them well-chilled until ready to prepare.

To best appreciate the mild flavor of this firm fleshed fish, be sure to keep the preparation method simple. A traditional cooking method for yellow perch is to pan fry it. I particularly love a light breading mix of flour, fine-grind cornmeal, and seasonings (paprika, white pepper, and salt).

First, remove the skin from each fillet using a very sharp, thin-bladed knife: hold onto the tail skin with one hand and insert the knife blade between the skin and the flesh, move the knife blade quickly away from your holding hand to remove the fillet from the skin.

Next, soak the fillets in milk while preparing the breading mix and oil. Thoroughly pre-heat a heavy pan over medium heat then add canola oil. Roll each fillet in the flour mixture and place in the hot oil. Leave the fillets plenty of room to swim around in the oil, in other words, don't crowd the pan. Cook until golden brown. Serve with an acidic garnish such as a squeeze of lemon or a dollop of dill sauce.

# RECIPE for health

JUNE 2015

featured food:

## YELLOW PERCH

### Perch with Mango Salsa

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski.

- 8-10 oz. yellow perch fillets
- 1 T. harissa paste
- 1½ t. ground cumin
- 4 T. olive oil
- 1 serrano pepper, veined, seeded and minced
- ¼ c. small diced red pepper
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 mangos, peeled, medium dice (these do NOT have to be ripe)
- 2 t. turmeric
- 2 t. fenugreek leaves
- 1 t. ground coriander
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 t. white wine vinegar
- 3 T. brown sugar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Rinse and drain fillets on paper towel. Place fillets on sheet pan. Mix harissa paste and cumin together with 1 T. olive oil. Brush on the perch and let marinate in refrigerator for 1-2 hours

Heat 1 T. oil in a non-stick sauce pan over medium heat and sauté peppers and garlic for 1 minute. Add the mangos and reduce heat to low. Add seasonings, lemon juice, and vinegar and cook on low for 5 minutes. Add brown sugar and stir lightly until sugar is melted. Remove from heat; add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Add 3 T. olive oil to non-stick sauté pan; over medium high heat, lightly pan sear the perch cooking skin side down first and then turning after 3 minutes to finish cooking on the flesh side for an additional 2 minutes. Top with salsa and serve.

Try **Perch with Mango Salsa** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square, and Riverwalk Market on June 3.

- Join us in person at Brody Square Demo Kitchen. Sign-up at [health4u@msu.edu](mailto:health4u@msu.edu).
- Watch online: [alumni.msu.edu/livestream](http://alumni.msu.edu/livestream).