



RECIPE for health

JUNE 2014

featured food:

COD

By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

When it comes to the most consumed seafood in the U.S., cod consistently make the top 10 list. There are good reasons for cod's popularity: mild flavor, flaky texture, moderate price and year-round availability. Also cod make the grouping of fish with the lowest level of mercury and PCB contamination.

These lists throw all cod fish into one basket. While the various cod species are close cousins in the fish world, Atlantic cod and Pacific cod are not the same fish. Aside from the obvious ocean of origin distinction, there are a few differences: Atlantic cod taste sweeter and Pacific cod yield larger, thicker fillets. Another difference is their appearance when raw: Atlantic cod are translucent ranging from white to pinkish in color while Pacific cod are opaque and creamy white. Both are white and flaky when cooked making them interchangeable in culinary applications.

Wild-caught Atlantic cod were once abundant. Due to over fishing and warmer waters, [Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch](#) recommends avoiding most sources of Atlantic cod. Good alternatives are Pacific cod, pollock, haddock, whiting and hake.

Fresh cod should have the aroma of the seacoast but not a fishy smell. The flesh should be firm and springy when pressed with your finger. Once you get your fillets home, seal them in a plastic bag and place on a bed of ice in the refrigerator.

Brining, a technique often used with poultry, serves up at least 3 benefits for fish as well: 1) seasons without over salting; 2) remains moist when cooked; and 3) prevents the ooze of that unappealing white mass (albumin) during cooking. And it's quick! Fish need a much shorter brining time than other proteins. Use 5 tablespoons of salt in 2 quarts of water. Place the fish in the brine for 15 minutes. Remove from the brine and drain on paper towels. Then cook by braising, steaming, baking (in foil atop vegetables), making cod fish cakes or the ever-popular fish and chips.

Pan Seared Cod

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services.

- 1½ pounds fresh Pacific cod
- 1 (11-14 ounces) can coconut milk
- ½ cup chickpea flour (may substitute all-purpose flour)
- 2 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon cardamom
- Dash of nutmeg
- 2 Tablespoon canola oil
- Lemon, cut into wedges
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- Black pepper, to taste

The loin of cod may be more than an inch thick. If so, bisect the thicker areas to make pieces of uniform thickness, about ¾- to 1-inch thick. Pour coconut milk into a mixing bowl; whisk to combine liquids and the solids. Place cod pieces into the bowl with the coconut milk; cover and refrigerate for 15-30 minutes.

Mix flour, turmeric, ginger, cayenne pepper, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg together. Place in shallow dish. Heat oil in a non-stick sauté pan over medium-high heat.

Pull each piece of the fish out of the liquid; allow excess liquid to drip off before placing in flour. Dredge fish in seasoned flour and shake off excess. Place in pan with hot oil for 3 to 4 minutes, turn and cook another 3 to 4 minutes. Remove to serving platter. Immediately squeeze fresh lemon over the fish. Drop a few crystals of sea salt and a quarter turn of pepper from the pepper mill on each piece.

Try **Pan Seared Cod** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on June 11.