



UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Agriculture & Natural Resources

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

420 South Wilson Way, Stockton CA 95205-6299 Telephone: (209) 468-2085

Fax: (209) 462-5181 Web: <http://cesanjoaquin.ucdavis.edu>



NEWS RELEASE

By Nancy Feldman
Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor
UCCE Stanislaus County

October 2001

Frozen Fish

Consumers often equate fresh fish with good and frozen with bad. Actually, high quality seafood that has been properly processed, frozen, packaged and stored, is usually equal in quality to the fresh product.

Some species, such as turbot, rock lobster tails and shrimp, are only sold frozen due to their “perishability.” These items have been quick frozen within hours of being caught. The flash freezing process seals in quality that might otherwise be lost during shipping and storing.

What should you look for when selecting frozen fish? The flesh should be frozen solid without any discoloration, brownish tinge or white cottony appearance, which comes from drying out. Inspect the wrapper to be sure it is undamaged, moisture-proof and closely fits the item. There should be little or no odor.

Fish should be stored frozen solid at zero degrees Fahrenheit. Store frozen fish in the original package. Six months is the usual limit for fish, while shellfish should be used in less than three months. Frozen fish should never be refrozen and is best when used the same day as thawing.

Frozen fish need not be thawed before cooking except as necessary for ease and handling, such as when pan-frying or stuffing. Because it is very perishable, defrost fish in refrigerator or in microwave oven and cook immediately. After thawing, blot excess moisture from the fish with paper towels. This will prevent sauces and seasonings from becoming diluted.

Do not over cook seafood. Too high a temperature or for too long a period of time will toughen and dry out the fish. Fish is cooked when the thickest part loses its translucent appearance and flakes easily when tested with a fork. The flesh also separates readily from the bones.

Source: Pamela Tom, SRA; Consumer Marketing

###

Cooperative Extension programs are available to any individual or group without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap. Named products are used for clarification and ease of discussion only and are not necessarily endorsed or promoted by the University of California Cooperative Extension.