

Consuming Thoughts

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Economist For Berks Co.



Do you know how you can add even more flavor to an already delicious fish? Dress it up, of course. Seafood stuffings, or dressings, add variety to fish preparations. A stuffing also serves as an additional main food in the meal.

Stuffings can range from simple to elaborate. They can be easy as a basic bread or vegetable stuffing or can contain shellfish or other meat.

Celery, onion and spices are among the basic ingredients of most stuffings. Basil, bay leaf,

dill, oregano, paprika, pepper, seasoned peppers, tarragon, thyme, rosemary, sage, marjoram, chervil, chives, fennel, ginger and garlic nicely complement the flavor of seafood. Try commercially available Italian seasoning or lemon and pepper blends or blends created especially for seafood. Pair up any of these herbs, spices and seasonings with butter or margarine, and you'll be able to create even more flavor options for your seafood. Always add, omit or vary ingredients to suit your personal

taste. Just be sure that flavors do not overwhelm the fish.

Stuffed fish recipes sometimes call for sauces. Although they provide additional variety, they can often be omitted.

You need to make about one-half cup of stuffing per pound of fish. If you have extra stuffing, place it in a lightly greased baking dish and cook it along with the fish.

Always make stuffings just before cooking. Never stuff fish ahead of time, even if you're going to refrigerate it. And if you have leftovers, remove the stuffing and store it and the fish separately.

Handle stuffings lightly. Place them loosely rather than packing them. Packing will cause them to be heavy and doughy.

Most recipes for stuffed fish call for a whole fish. Although these recipes are delicious, you may hear complaints from family members because the head and tail fin are generally kept on the fish. It is difficult to cut through the

backbone, especially if the fish is large. And because of this, the servings are usually not very attractive. The bones in most stuffed fish are an even bigger nuisance.

Because of these problems, you may choose to use only skinless, boneless fillets in stuffed fish recipes. You can still use the stuffing recipes in whole fish, if you prefer.

Rolled fillets can be fastened with toothpicks for cooking. Or you can roll them and place them in lightly greased muffin tins for easy cooking.

If you place stuffing between two fillets, you may want to leave the skin on the top fillet. This holds in moisture. Just remove the

skin before serving the fish.

If you choose to stuff whole fish, you can use either small fish or those weighing up to six pounds. Either remove the head and tail, or leave them on. If you leave the head on, be sure the fish is degilled. Lightly place the stuffing inside the fish cavity. Fasten with toothpicks, metal cooking pins or sew with heavy thread. After the fish is baked, remove the top skin.

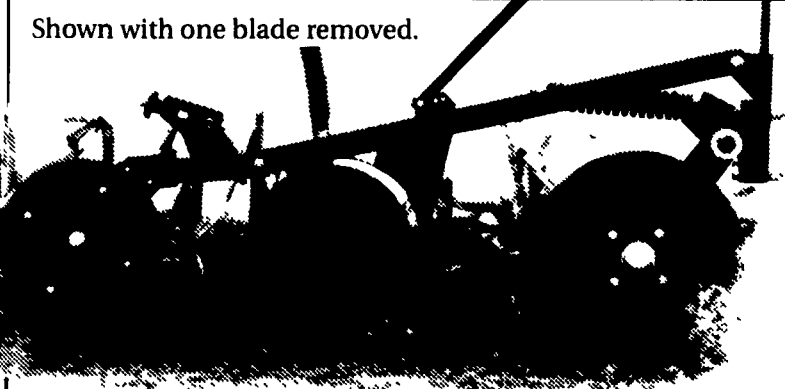
As always, remember that you can substitute species. If a recipe calls for flounder and only snapper is available, don't be afraid to substitute. Just remember to exchange similar species — white fish for white fish, lean for lean.

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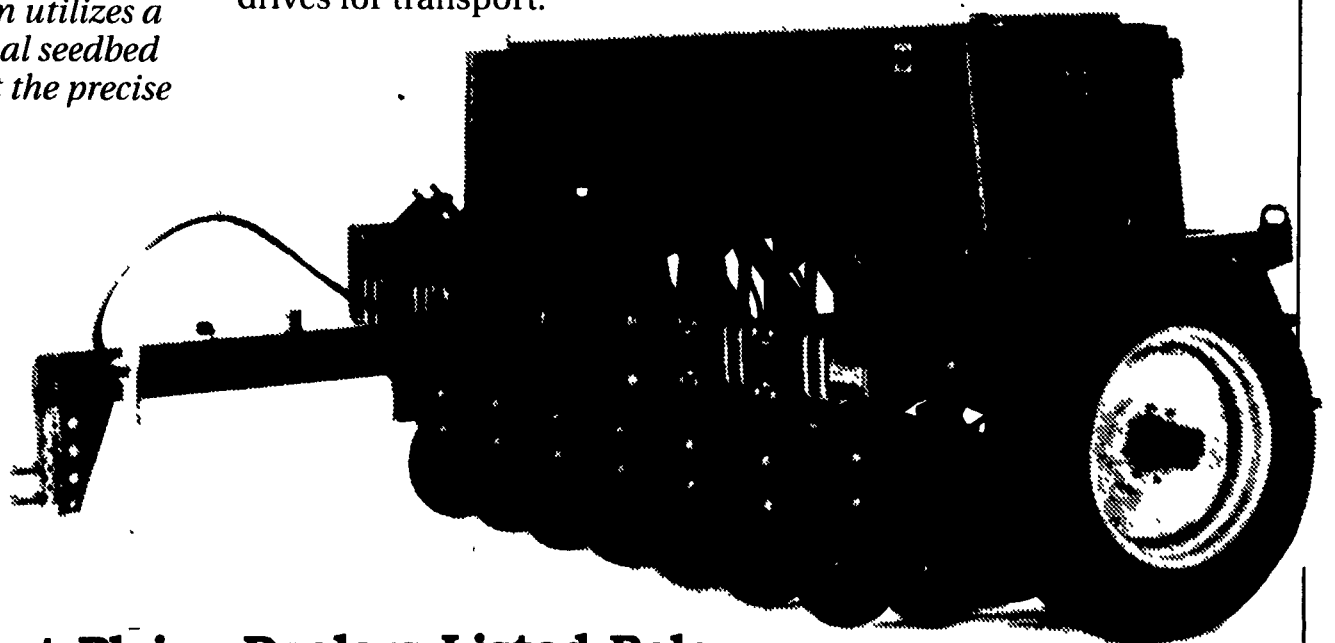
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