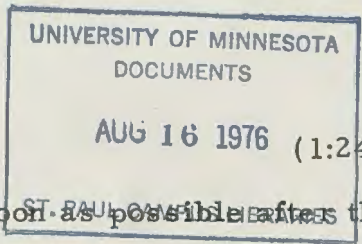


August 13, 1976

Fresh Fish



Clean freshwater fish as soon as possible after they are caught, say University of Minnesota consumer information specialists. To store fresh fish, wrap in moisture-proof paper and store in the coldest part of the refrigerator. Use or freeze the fish within two days.

Clean and freeze fish as soon as possible because fish deteriorates rapidly. Fish must be frozen at zero degrees Fahrenheit to maintain quality. Store it in the coldest part of the freezer. If you are unable to freeze it immediately, pack it in crushed ice and keep it very cold.

Fish dries out and develops an off-taste when exposed to oxygen, so use a moisture-vapor proof wrap for freezing. Use heavy duty aluminum foil or saran-type film wrap to prevent rancidity.

A popular way to freeze fish is to use milk cartons, but they cannot be sterilized. They may harbor bacteria that can contaminate the fish. If you can purchase unused cartons, these are fine, but do not use the used cartons.

Fish is one thing that may easily be forgotten at the bottom of the freezer, so it is important to use it during the recommended storage time. Storage length varies with the type of fish. Northern, smelt and lake and rainbow trout can be kept frozen for four to six months; bluegills, bass, crappies and sunfish for seven to nine months and walleyes for nine months. Thaw fish in the original wrap and cook as soon as it has defrosted.

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