

HOW TO COOK HALIBUT

Test Kitchen Series No. 9

United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

HOW TO COOK HALIBUT

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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Flaked Halibut | 2 |
| Halibut Avocado Cocktail | 2 |
| Cocktail Sauce | 2 |
| Halibut and Onion Soup | 2 |
| Americana Bouillabaisse | 2 |
| Halibut Soup Gourmet | 2 |
| Halibut Salad Ring | 3 |
| Jellied Halibut Salad | 3 |
| Curried Halibut Casserole | 4 |
| Halibut a la Diable | 4 |
| Baked Halibut Loaf | 5 |
| Halibut Olympus | 5 |
| Broiled Halibut Steaks | 5 |
| Broiled Halibut Steaks with Anchovy Butter | 5 |
| Anchovy Butter | 5 |
| Halibut Hawaiian | 6 |
| Halibut Steaks with Piquant Meringue | 6 |
| Pan-Fried Halibut Steaks | 7 |
| Chicken-Fried Halibut Steaks | 7 |
| Batter-Fried Halibut | 7 |
| Fried Halibut Chinese Style | 7 |
| Halibut in Sour Cream Sauce | 8 |
| Halibut and Mushroom Pie | 8 |
| Halibut in Herb Sauce | 8 |
| Halibut With Almonds | 8 |
| Halibut Filled Rolls | 9 |
| Halibut Sandwiches | 9 |

HOW TO COOK HALIBUT

The halibut is the largest of the flatfishes and is found in the cold waters of the North Pacific, the Arctic, and the North Atlantic Oceans. Its white, translucent flesh is known and appreciated the country over. This firm and flavorful fish is one of the most highly prized of all white-fleshed fish. The greatest proportion of the United States supply comes from the North Pacific Ocean, off the coasts of Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska, where the fishery is regulated by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. This Commission sets a quota annually on the amount, in pounds, which may be taken by commercial fishing vessels. During recent years the annual quota has been in the neighborhood of 65 to 70 million pounds. On the North Atlantic coast, where halibut is taken in much smaller amounts, there are no regulations as to seasons, size of catch, or fishing areas, so some landings are made throughout the year.

The main period during which halibut is taken on the Pacific coast begins in early May and lasts about 8 to 10 weeks. The fish taken during this short period must supply the major proportion of the country's demand for halibut throughout the year; however, frozen halibut can be successfully stored for extended periods.

Commercially, halibut range in size from 5 to more than 80 pounds, with a few as large as 400 pounds being landed. The 5- to 10-pound sizes

are referred to as "chicken halibut"; those from 10 to 60 pounds, "mediums"; those from 60 to 80 pounds, "large"; and those over 80 pounds, as "whale" halibut.

The fish are eviscerated aboard ship and held in ice until they are unloaded, headed, and frozen. After the initial freezing, the halibut are dipped into cold water several times until a protective ice glaze is formed. During the subsequent storage in refrigerated warehouses, the glaze is renewed periodically by spraying the stacked fish with a fine mist of water.

Steaks are the most common retail form in which halibut is marketed. They are cross-section slices of dressed fish containing a short section of the backbone. Chunks and fillets of halibut are other forms in which halibut may be purchased.

Frozen steaks or fillets may be cooked without thawing if additional cooking time is allowed. When steaks or fillets are to be breaded or stuffed, they are more easily handled if they have been thawed. The preferred method for thawing frozen fish is to leave the fish in the refrigerator overnight. If room-temperature thawing is necessary, great care must be taken so that the fish flesh remains chilled at all times.

Halibut may be prepared by any of the basic cooking methods: frying, baking, broiling, boiling, and steaming. A selection of recipes for cooking halibut is included in this booklet.

FLAKED HALIBUT

- 1 pound halibut steaks or fillets
- 1 quart boiling water
- 1 tablespoon salt

Place steaks in boiling salted water. Cover and return to boiling point; simmer for 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Drain. Remove skin and bones. Flake. Serves 6.

This recipe will yield 2 cups flaked halibut that can be used in recipes calling for flaked fish.

HALIBUT AVOCADO COCKTAIL

- 2 cups flaked halibut (above)
- 1 cup cocktail sauce
- 1 cup avocado cubes
- Parsley
- Lemon wedges

Arrange layers of cocktail sauce, avocado, and fish in 6 cocktail glasses. Begin and end with cocktail sauce. Garnish with parsley and lemon wedges. Serves 6.

Cocktail Sauce

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup catsup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 6 drops tabasco
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped celery

Combine all ingredients and chill. Serves 6.

HALIBUT AND ONION SOUP

- 1 pound halibut steaks or fillets
- 4 chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 quart boiling water
- 1 quart sliced onion
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or other fat, melted
- 2 tablespoons flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- Dash paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheese

Remove skin and bones from steaks; cut into 1-inch cubes. Dissolve bouillon cubes in boiling water. Cook onion in butter until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings. Add bouillon gradually and heat until boiling, stirring constantly. Add fish and simmer for 10 minutes. Garnish with cheese sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.

AMERICANA BOUILLABAISSÉ

- 1 pound halibut steaks or fillets
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped celery
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or other fat, melted
- 1 can (7 ounces) minced clams
- 1 can (5 ounces) shrimp, drained
- 1 can (1 pound 4 ounces) tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon thyme
- 1 bay leaf, crushed
- Dash pepper
- Grated Parmesan cheese
- 6 slices French bread

Remove skin and bones from steaks; cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes. Cook onion, celery, and garlic in butter until tender. Add remaining ingredients except cheese and bread. Bring to boiling point and simmer for 20 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over bread; toast. Arrange toast in large soup bowls and cover with bouillabaisse. Serves 6.

HALIBUT SOUP GOURMET

- 2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
- 1 onion, sliced
- 3 sprigs parsley
- 1 lemon slice
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 whole allspice
- 4 whole peppercorns
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 quart water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or other fat
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups fish stock and water
- 1 cup coffee cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped parsley

Remove skin and bones from steaks; cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes. Place trimmings in saucepan with the next 8 ingredients; cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and save fish stock. Melt butter; blend in flour and salt. Add fish stock gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add fish; simmer for 10 minutes. Add cream; heat. Garnish with parsley sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.

HALIBUT SALAD RING

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
1 can (1 pound 4 ounces) crushed pineapple
2 packages lime-flavored gelatin
1½ cups boiling water
2 cups pineapple juice and water
¼ cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup slivered toasted almonds
½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 teaspoon lemon juice
¼ teaspoon salt
Salad greens
Red radishes

Drain pineapple and save liquid. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add pineapple juice and water, lemon juice, and salt. Place in a 1-quart ring mold; chill until firm. Combine almonds, mayonnaise, lemon juice, salt, pineapple, and fish. Chill. Unmold gelatin on salad greens and fill center with fish mixture. Garnish with radishes. Serves 6.

JELLIED HALIBUT SALAD

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
1 package lemon-flavored gelatin
1½ cups boiling water
¼ cup vinegar
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup grated carrot
¼ cup chopped green pepper
Lettuce
Mayonnaise or salad dressing

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add vinegar and salt; chill until almost congealed. Fold in carrot, green pepper, and fish. Place in 6 individual molds; chill until firm. Unmold on lettuce; garnish with mayonnaise. Serves 6.



Halibut Salad Ring

CURRIED HALIBUT CASSEROLE

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
1 package (8 ounces) noodles
1½ teaspoons curry powder
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
½ cup milk
1 can (10½ ounces) cream of mushroom soup
1 can (1 pound 4 ounces) asparagus, drained
1 cup grated cheese

Cook noodles as directed on package; drain. Place in a well-greased 2½-quart casserole. Cover with fish. Combine curry powder, butter, milk, and soup. Pour over fish and noodles. Arrange asparagus over casserole and sprinkle with cheese. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

HALIBUT A LA DIABLE

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
2 tablespoons coffee cream
6 slices buttered toast
1 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
⅓ cup chili sauce
2 teaspoons prepared mustard
2 drops tabasco
½ teaspoon vinegar
½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon celery salt

Combine fish and cream; mix well. Arrange toast on a baking sheet and cover each slice with fish mixture. Combine remaining ingredients. Cover fish with mayonnaise mixture. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 15 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.



Curried Halibut Casserole

BAKED HALIBUT LOAF

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
1 chicken bouillon cube
¾ cup boiling water
1½ cups soft bread cubes
½ cup chopped celery
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
½ cup coffee cream
1 teaspoon grated onion
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 eggs, beaten

Dissolve bouillon cube in boiling water. Combine all ingredients. Place in a well-greased loaf pan, 9½ x 5¼ x 2¾ inches. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 1 hour or until loaf is firm in the center. Serves 6.

HALIBUT OLYMPUS

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
⅓ cup butter or other fat
3 tablespoons flour
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
1 tablespoon grated onion
½ teaspoon celery salt
¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper
¼ cup chopped pimiento
3 drops tabasco
1 egg, beaten
2 tablespoons sherry
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
½ cup dry bread crumbs

Melt butter; blend in flour and salt. Add milk gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add the next 7 ingredients. Stir a little of the hot sauce into the egg; add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add sherry and fish. Place in 6 well-greased, individual, 10-ounce casseroles. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over top of each casserole. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 10 to 15 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

BROILED HALIBUT STEAKS

2 pounds halibut steaks
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
¼ cup butter or other fat, melted

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on a preheated, greased broiler pan about 3 inches from source of heat. Brush with butter and broil 4 to 8 minutes or until slightly brown. Baste with butter and turn carefully. Brush other side with butter, and broil 4 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6.

BROILED HALIBUT STEAKS WITH ANCHOVY BUTTER

2 pounds halibut steaks
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
3 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on a preheated, greased broiler pan about 3 inches from source of heat. Brush with butter and broil 4 to 8 minutes or until slightly brown. Baste with butter and turn carefully. Brush other side with butter, and broil 4 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Pour anchovy butter over fish. Serves 6.

Anchovy Butter

2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon anchovy paste
3 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
Dash paprika
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Combine all ingredients. Serve over broiled fish. Serves 6.

HALIBUT HAWAIIAN

- 2 halibut steaks (1 pound each)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1 cup soft bread cubes
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup drained crushed pineapple
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon curry powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 3 slices bacon (optional)

Sprinkle steaks with salt. Combine next 6 ingredients. Place one steak in a well-greased baking pan, 11 x 7 x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Place rice mixture on the steak and cover with the other steak. Fasten together with toothpicks or skewers. Brush top with butter and lay slices of bacon on top. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 30 to 40 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6.

HALIBUT STEAKS WITH PIQUANT MERINGUE

- 2 pounds halibut steaks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter or other fat, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1 egg white, beaten

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on a preheated, greased broiler pan about 3 inches from source of heat. Brush with butter and broil 4 to 8 minutes or until slightly brown. Baste with butter and turn carefully. Brush other side with butter and broil 4 to 8 minutes longer or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. While fish is broiling, combine next 4 ingredients and fold into egg white. Place mixture on top of fish. Brown in broiler about 1 minute. Serves 6.



Halibut Hawaiian

PAN-FRIED HALIBUT STEAKS

2 pounds halibut steaks
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon milk or water
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
1 cup dry bread crumbs, cracker crumbs, cornmeal,
or flour

Cut steaks into serving-size portions. Combine egg, milk, and seasonings. Dip fish in egg mixture and roll in crumbs. Place fish in a heavy frying pan which contains about one-eighth inch of fat, hot but not smoking. Fry at moderate heat. When fish is brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time approximately 10 minutes, depending on thickness of fish. Drain on absorbent paper. Serves 6.

NOTE.—A commercial breading may be used. Follow the directions on the package.

BATTER-FRIED HALIBUT

2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon marjoram
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
1 egg, beaten

Remove skin and bones from steaks; cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes. Sprinkle with salt. Sift together flour, baking powder, marjoram, salt, and pepper. Combine milk and egg; blend into flour mixture. Dip cubes of fish in the batter. Fry in a basket in deep fat, 375° F., for about 2 minutes or until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper. Serves 6.

CHICKEN-FRIED HALIBUT STEAKS

2 pounds halibut steaks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
1 tablespoon water
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and roll in flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Place fish in a heavy frying pan which contains about one-eighth inch of fat, hot but not smoking. Fry at moderate heat. When fish is brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time approximately 10 minutes, depending on thickness of fish. Add water; cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove fish to a hot platter. Pour pan gravy over fish and sprinkle with parsley. Serves 6.

FRIED HALIBUT CHINESE STYLE

2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar
1 cup sugar
 $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups water
3 chicken bouillon cubes
1 large green pepper, cut into strips
1 cup drained pineapple chunks
3 tablespoons cornstarch
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons water
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons soy sauce

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and roll in flour seasoned with salt. Place fish in a heavy frying pan which contains about one-eighth inch of fat, hot but not smoking. Fry at moderate heat. When fish is brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time approximately 10 minutes, depending on thickness of fish. Drain on absorbent paper. While fish is frying, combine vinegar, sugar, water, bouillon cubes, green pepper, and pineapple. Simmer for 10 minutes. Combine cornstarch, water, and soy sauce to make a thin paste. Add gradually to hot sauce and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Serve over fish. Serves 6.

HALIBUT IN SOUR CREAM SAUCE

2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
½ cup flour
1¼ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon paprika
Dash pepper
½ cup onion rings
⅓ cup butter or other fat, melted
½ teaspoon crushed sweet basil
1 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Cut steaks into serving-size portions and roll in flour seasoned with salt, paprika, and pepper. Cook onion in butter until tender. Remove onion from pan and save. Place fish in pan. Fry at moderate heat. When fish is brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time approximately 10 minutes, depending on thickness of fish. Cover top with onions, sweet basil, and sour cream. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Garnish with parsley. Serves 6.

HALIBUT AND MUSHROOM PIE

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
1 cup pastry mix
3 slices bacon
1¼ cups milk, scalded
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 teaspoon grated onion
½ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
3 eggs, beaten
1 can (4 ounces) mushroom stems and pieces, drained
Paprika

Prepare pastry mix as directed on package. Roll and line a 9-inch pie pan. Fry bacon until crisp; drain and crumble. To milk add parsley, onion, salt, and pepper. Add hot milk mixture gradually to the egg, stirring constantly. Place fish in pie shell. Cover with mushrooms. Pour milk-and-egg mixture over mushrooms and fish. Sprinkle bacon and paprika over pie. Bake in a hot oven, 425° F., for 20 minutes; reduce heat to 325° F., and continue baking about 10 to 15 minutes or until pie is firm in the center. Serves 6.

HALIBUT IN HERB SAUCE

2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 cup boiling water
¼ cup butter or other fat
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
½ teaspoon prepared mustard
1 tablespoon catsup
½ teaspoon vinegar
½ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
1 tablespoon butter or other fat, melted
¼ cup dry bread crumbs

Place steaks in a well-greased baking pan, 11 x 7 x 1½ inches. Dissolve bouillon cube in boiling water. Melt butter; blend in cornstarch. Add bouillon gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Stir in the next 7 ingredients. Pour over fish. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over fish. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 30 to 35 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6.

HALIBUT WITH ALMONDS

2 pounds halibut steaks or fillets
1¼ cups milk, scalded
¾ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
2 tablespoons butter or other fat
3 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ cup slivered toasted almonds
Paprika

Place steaks in a well-greased baking pan, 11 x 7 x 1½ inches. To milk add seasonings and pour over fish. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 15 minutes. Remove from oven. Drain liquid and save. Place fish on a hot platter and keep warm. Melt butter and blend in flour. Add hot liquid gradually and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Add lemon juice. Pour over fish and top with almonds and paprika. Serves 6.

HALIBUT FILLED ROLLS

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
¾ cup grated cheese
½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
¾ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
6 large buttered rolls

Combine all ingredients except rolls. Fill rolls with fish mixture. Place on a baking sheet and heat in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 15 minutes or until heated through and cheese has melted. Serves 6.

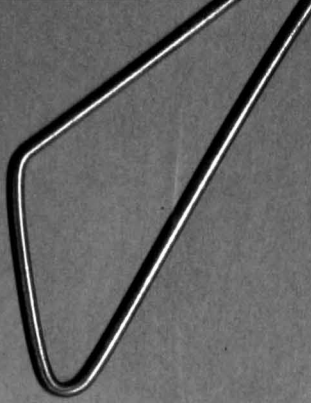
HALIBUT SANDWICHES

2 cups flaked halibut (p. 2)
¼ cup sliced stuffed olives
½ cup chopped celery
1 teaspoon grated onion
½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
½ teaspoon prepared mustard
12 slices buttered bread

Combine all ingredients except bread. Chill. Spread 6 slices of bread with fish mixture; cover with remaining 6 slices of bread. Serves 6.



Halibut Filled Rolls



Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—a department of conservation—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, fish, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and Territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.

