

Florida Food Fare

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Mahi-Mahi

Description: Properly called dolphin or dorado, the mahi-mahi is not related to the mammal called dolphin. It is one of the most beautiful fish in the sea; brilliantly colored with an iridescent bluish green and gold body, and golden yellow fins and forked tail. The average size is 3-6 pounds but they have been known to grow as large as 5 feet and reach 70 pounds. One distinguishing characteristic between males and females is the head. The male's head is more rounded while the female's head slopes down to the mouth. One of the fastest swimming fish in the sea, they prefer the warmer tropical and subtropical waters of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Gulf Coast of Florida. Their spawning season extends from late spring through early summer. Mahi-Mahi feed offshore, near the surface on small fish, shrimp, squid and crabs and are commercially harvested by hook-and-line.

Availability: Fresh mahi-mahi is available all year round in this area but the supply is most plentiful April through August with May being the heaviest month. In Central and South America the season runs from November until March. It is available frozen all year round, sold as fillets usually with the skin left on.

Nutritional Value: A 4 -ounce portion of mahi-mahi yields approximately 100 calories, 18.5 g protein, 1 g total fat, 15 mg calcium, 1.3 g iron, 143 mg phosphorus, 416 mg potassium, 88 mg sodium, and 180 IU vitamin A.

Selection and care: As with any fish, when purchasing, it should have an agreeable fresh odor. Any strong ammonia-like odor is caused by bacteria on the fish and should be avoided. Look for firm fillets, with red bloodlines. Meat should be pink to light beige. The darker the meat, the stronger the taste. When purchased fresh, it should be refrigerated at 32-38 degrees F. and used within two days. For longer storage, wrap well and freeze at 0 degrees F. for no more

than 4 months. Thaw frozen mahi-mahi in the refrigerator or under cold running water.

Preparation and Use: The meat of mahi-mahi is firm and lean with large, moist flakes and has a sweet mild flavor. Some people claim it is the best eating of the fin fish. The skinned meat can be prepared in virtually any cooking method, broiling, poaching, steaming, baking or frying. When grilling, the skin should be left on to keep the fish intact. Care should be taken to avoid overcooking.

Recipes:

Broiled Mahi-Mahi with Tangy Glaze

2 pounds skinless mahi-mahi fillets	1/3 cup frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
1 tablespoon prepared mustard	
1/4 cup canola oil	1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
1/2 teaspoon salt	large bay leaf crumbled

Cut fish into serving size portions; arrange single layer in a baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients; mix well. Pour marinade over fillets; turn to coat evenly. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes. Place fish on a lightly-oiled broiler pan. Baste with marinade; broil 4 inches from source of heat 4-5 minutes on each side. Cook until fish flakes easily with a fork. Yield 6 servings.

Mahi-Mahi in Fennel Sauce

1 1/2 pounds mahi-mahi	1 tablespoons butter or margarine
1/4 cup chopped onion	1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil	1/2 cup chopped fennel bulb
1/4 teaspoon salt	

Heat oven to 450 degrees F. If fillets are large, cut into 6 serving pieces. Arrange fish in ungreased rectangular baking dish. Heat oil and margarine in a saucepan over medium high heat. Sauté remaining ingredients in oil mixture until onion is tender; spoon over fish. Bake uncovered 12 to 17 minutes or until fish flakes easily with fork. Serves 6.

Curried Mahi-Mahi

1 pound mahi-mahi fillets, skinned and cut into 1-inch pieces	1 teaspoon minced ginger root
1/4 teaspoon salt	1 1/2 teaspoons curry powder
Pepper to taste	1 1/2 cups canned no salt added tomatoes, chopped, and their liquid
1 tablespoon olive oil	1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

2/3 cup chopped onion
1 teaspoon minced garlic

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

Sprinkle mahi-mahi with salt and pepper and set aside. In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat, add onion, garlic and ginger-root. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add curry powder and sauté for 1 minute longer. Stir in tomatoes with their liquid and lime juice, cook over medium heat stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Add fish to the skillet, combine it well with sauce. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 5-7 minutes until fish is cooked through. Sprinkle with parsley. Serves 4.

Mahi-Mahi Amandine

1/2 cup slivered almonds 4 mahi-mahi fillets
4 tablespoons melted butter 4 tablespoons sherry
2 tablespoons chopped parsley Freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon grated lemon rind 1/2 pound center cut bacon, fried and crumbled
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice 4 green onions, chopped
Lemon wedges

Lightly brown almonds in nonstick pan and set aside. Combine butter, parsley, lemon rind and juice. Rub both sides of the fillets with sherry and place on a broiler pan. Sprinkle with pepper. Spoon some of the butter mixture over each fillet. Broil for 5 to 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the fillet. Turn over, spoon on more butter sauce and continue broiling until done. Do not overcook or the fish will be dry. Remove to a serving platter. Sprinkle with almonds, bacon and green onions. Garnish with lemon wedges. Swordfish or shark may be substituted for mahi-mahi if desired.