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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF FISHERIES

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THE EULACHON:

A Rich and Delicious Little Fish.^a

This name, which looks like Greek, but is Pacific coast Indian, is pronounced U'-la-kon, not "hooligan" or "oolican," as it is sometimes called in Alaska. Those who know the fish believe that it deserves the best name that can be applied to it, and that it is so much superior to the smelt that the common designation "Columbia River smelt," in addition to being a misnomer, is almost a reflection on the food qualities of the eulachon. The dean of American ichthyologists describes it as being "the finest food fish in the world—tender, fragrant, digestible"—and others who have eaten it are equally laudatory. It is probably the fattest of fishes, but its oil has a peculiarly delicate agreeable flavor and, when extracted, is solid at

ordinary temperatures. In the abundance and consistence of its fats its nutritive value is more like that of the best grade of meats than is the case with most other fishes.

The eulachon is a relative of the smelts and, more remotely, the salmons, and like them it has the habit of running into rivers and brooks for the purpose of spawning. It comes from its home in the coastal waters of the Pacific in vast numbers and after depositing its eggs dies, a fate which it shares with a small number of other fish, conspicuously its neighbors, the salmons of the Pacific coast. Each generation is exterminated as soon as it has provided its successor.

Eulachons are found from Oregon north to Alaska. They are slender fish—when adult about a foot long—and although resembling the smelt in form, lack its brilliant silvery sheen. They are

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being placed on the market fresh, frozen, brine salted, kippered, and hard smoked and canned. The kippered fish will keep about 10 days exposed to the air in a cool place, but can also be obtained in cans, in which they will keep like other canned fish. The frozen fish are as good as the fresh, but the consumer should buy them still frozen and thaw them in cold water just before using.

Fresh and frozen (thawed) eulachon may be cleaned as follows:

To clean, leaving the heads on.—Rub or scrape the scales off under water. Sever the fleshy projection which extends from between the pectoral fins forward between the gill covers to the junction of the lower jawbones. Grasp the gills of the two sides between the thumb and forefinger and pull them out; the stomach and gut will come with them. Any remaining viscera may be removed by placing the fish under water and firmly pressing with the thumb along the belly from vent to the opening between the gill covers, but as the portions remaining are likely to consist almost wholly of roe or milt, which are delicious and nutritious, it is well not to perform this last operation.

To clean, removing the heads.—Scale the fish as prescribed above. Just back of the top of the head cut about halfway through the fish, toward the belly side. With the flat of the knife blade tear away the head and with it will come the stomach and gut and a small portion of the lower part of the fish. The roe and milt may be left in or removed, as described above.

When served, after cooking in any manner, the bones may be readily removed by running a table knife along the back and laying the fish open. The backbone and ribs will be exposed and can be removed without breaking the flesh.

RECIPES.

FRESH OR FROZEN EULACHON.

1. *Fried eulachon.*—Remove scales, heads, viscera, and tails. Do not split. Dip each fish in well-beaten egg and roll in yellow corn meal. Salt to taste and fry in a well-greased frying pan, turning the fish to brown both sides. Do not have fire too hot. Small sweet cucumber pickles go well with the fish or sliced lemon may be used. Accompany with crisp baked potatoes, which should be eaten skins and all.

2. *Fried eulachon.*—Remove scales, gills, and viscera of one dozen fish, leaving heads on. Thoroughly mix 1 well-beaten egg, one-half cup of milk, and 1 tablespoonful of flour. Dip each fish, previously salted to taste, in the mixture, and roll in fine cracker crumbs. Fry brown in deep fat and serve with tartar or tomato sauce.

3. *Broiled eulachon.*—Dress clean and wipe dry. Score a little across the back and broil slowly over a clear fire. Serve on hot platter. Season highly with lemon juice and white pepper.

4. *Baked eulachon.*—Remove scales, gills, and viscera of one dozen eulachon, leaving heads on. Do not split. Make stuffing of cracker meal, milk, a little salt, and chopped sweet peppers or paprika, and, if desired, a little powdered sage. Stuff each fish with the mixture. Place in a well-greased pan and just cover with a mixture of 1 well-beaten egg, one-half cup of milk, and one-half cup of cracker meal

or fine crumbs. Bake until rich brown on top. Serve from pan in which the fish are cooked.

5. *Baked eulachon*.—Dress and clean, wipe dry, and rub with salt and pepper; lay in a baking dish with chopped onions, parsley, and fresh mushrooms. Pour in the pan enough thin broth or hot water to cover bottom of dish; add juice of onion (quantity according to amount of fish). Bake until flesh parts easily from bone; season gravy in baking pan; pour over fish on platter. Serve with sliced lemons and chopped parsley.

6. *Baked eulachon*.—Dress and clean fish, split and lay open meat side up and season with salt and pepper. Place in a baking pan and bake from 15 to 20 minutes in a medium oven, brushing fish over once or twice while cooking with beaten eggs applied with a small brush or swab. Garnish with parsley and lemon.

7. *Steamed eulachon with drawn butter*.—Prepare fish as if for frying. Line the bottom of a baking pan, or agate pan with a wet cloth, place fish in a row in pan, sprinkle with salt and white pepper, cover with another white cloth or napkin wet thoroughly with hot water. Cover with another pan. Place in oven to steam for about 25 minutes, basting frequently with hot water. When cooked, place on a hot platter, serve with drawn butter or tomato sauce, garnish with chopped parsley and sliced lemons.

SALT EULACHON.

8. *Fried salt eulachon*.—If the fish have not been cleaned, remove the viscera as described previously. Soak for one hour, wipe dry and prepare and cook the fish as in the recipes for fresh eulachon.

9. *Broiled salt eulachon*.—After cleaning, soak, wipe dry, and lay on a broiler in a gas oven or over live coals (wood or charcoal preferably). Broil until brown on both sides. Dress with pepper to taste. Serve with pieces of lemon.

10. *Boiled salt eulachon*.—After cleaning, soak the desired number of fish one hour in cold water. Tie in cheesecloth bag and boil for a few minutes. Serve with egg sauce and boiled potatoes.

11. *Partly dried salt eulachon, broiled or baked*.—Clean the desired number of fish without splitting or removing the heads. Run a slender stick or string through the eyes, stringing the fish in a row. Hang in strong sunlight or moderate artificial heat (over a stove) until somewhat wrinkled, but not hard (about half dried). When the fish are sufficiently dry, they may be broiled or baked, using no dressing. They are excellent served with crisp baked potatoes or potato chips for luncheon or light supper.

12. *Dried salt eulachon*.—Remove from brine and drain. Run a slender stick or string through the eyes and hang in strong sunlight or moderate artificial heat until thoroughly dry. If dried in the sun and out of doors, put them under cover at night and do not let them be exposed to any moisture, as the fish are so oily they may become rancid. It will take from two to several days to dry them. When well dried they may be kept for a considerable length of time if sealed or tied up in a paper bag away from moisture. These fish thus prepared may be eaten uncooked, or broiled or baked. No other treatment is necessary.

KIPPERED OR SMOKED EULACHON.^a

13. *Broiled smoked eulachon*.—Place fish on gridiron over glowing fire. When a rich brown, remove from fire and serve.

14. *Creamed smoked eulachon on toast*.—Take 2 cups milk, 2 tablespoonfuls of flour, and 1 cup smoked fish cut into small pieces. Boil milk and flour, then add fish. Serve hot on toast.

15. *Canape of smoked eulachon*.—Cut 6 slices one-quarter of an inch thick from a stale loaf of bread, then cut each into 2-inch square pieces. Toast them to a nice

^a In some cases smoked fish are so salt as to require more or less soaking. The cook must use her judgment with the particular material in hand.

golden brown and lightly butter. Cover them with very thin slices of smoked fish nicely trimmed. Sprinkle over them a hard-boiled egg finely chopped, decorate with a little parsley and quarters of lemon, and serve.

16. *Baked smoked eulachon in paper*.—Wrap each fish in one or two thicknesses of paper (preferably the brown paper used by butchers), place in a pan, and put in a hot oven for one-half hour. The fish is thus thoroughly heated without being dried out. Before serving remove paper wrapping and the skin of the fish.

17. *Smoked eulachon a l'Italienne*.—The fish is well cleaned, washed in hot water, dried, and dredged with flour inside and out. Fry in deep, very hot oil, to which some chopped parsley is added, and serve with boiled macaroni.

18. *Smoked eulachon with rice*.—Boil one-half pound of rice in 1 quart of bouillon until well done. Heat 4 tablespoonfuls of finely chopped onions with some butter and 6 mashed white pepper seeds; mix with the rice. Skin and bone the fish; cut into small pieces. Butter a plate, on which place half of the rice, then the fish, and in turn the rest of the rice. Form this into a pyramid, baste with a beaten egg, dredge with grated cheese and bread, add another small piece of butter, and bake, taking care that the plate does not get too hot from below.

19. *Smoked eulachon in ramekins*.—Cream together 2 tablespoonfuls of flour, 1 of butter, Cayenne pepper, and a little salt. Work into this 2 cups of milk. Put on the fire, and when thoroughly heated add 2 cups of smoked fish that has been broken into flakes. Butter ramekins and fill with creamed fish. Set in a pan of hot water and bake for half an hour.

SAUCES.

Tartar sauce.—Make mayonnaise dressing in the regular form by rubbing yolk of eggs (raw) with olive oil, mustard, and salt, adding oil and vinegar alternately until good and firm. Add finely chopped pickles, parsley, and capers, stir all together and serve in a separate dish.

Tomato sauce.—Place one-half can of tomatoes, a chopped onion, one-half tablespoonful of salt, one-fourth teaspoonful of pepper, and 1 clove in a pan and allow to simmer for 10 minutes. Rub through a sieve or colander. Heat 1 teaspoonful of butter mixed with a teaspoonful of flour, add the tomatoes gradually, stir until smooth, and allow to simmer 5 minutes.

Drawn butter.—Mix together in a small saucepan 1 heaping teaspoonful of butter, the same quantity of flour, and a little salt. Add one-half pint of hot water, and place saucepan in a larger pan of hot water until required. Pour over the fish, which also may be sprinkled with chopped parsley and the yolk of a hard-boiled egg.

Egg sauce.—Mix 3 ounces of butter (unmelted), 2 ounces of flour, salt and pepper, and a little nutmeg if desired. Add 1 pint of boiling water and stir until smooth. Boil for a short time and stir in the yolks of 2 eggs and a little lemon juice. Press through a wet cloth and add 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped fine.

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