

The easy way to cook fish: Wrap it in parchment paper

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(HealthDay)—Fish is a delicious, lean protein with healthy fats, but

many people are afraid to cook it and save it for when dining out.

Whether you avoid cooking [fish](#) because you're concerned about causing a fishy odor in your kitchen (which only happens when the fish isn't fresh) or the calories of typical breaded and fried fillets, a nifty technique using parchment paper can solve both dilemmas. What's more, cooking fish in parchment paper also makes for speedy clean-up.

Of course, it's important to start with fresh fish. A white fish like tilapia, readily available at most fish counters these days, should be odorless and have firm flesh that isn't breaking apart or discolored. Make friends with your fish monger, whether at your supermarket's seafood counter or a fish store. Regular shoppers tend to get the freshest catch.

While you're at the market, buy a roll of parchment paper. You'll find it in the [baking](#) aisle or the foil and plastic wrap section. Once you have it in your kitchen, you'll find many uses for it, such as lining baking sheets for roasting vegetables.

Here's how to use it for baking virtually any type of fish. Note: While this recipe is for small individual fillets, you can use a single, longer piece of parchment for larger fillets or even a whole fish.

No-Muss, No-Fuss Baked Fish

- 2 8-inch squares of parchment paper
- 2 4-ounce tilapia fillets
- 2 carrots, peeled
- 1/2 small zucchini
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut the carrots and zucchini into matchstick-sized pieces. Place each fish fillet in the center of one square of parchment paper. Top each fillet with equal amounts of carrots and zucchini and then sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Finally, drizzle one teaspoon of the oil over each serving.

To create a [parchment](#) paper package to enclose each fish portion, first fold the top down lengthwise over the fish and vegetables, then fold up the bottom part. Now fold the right side of the [paper](#) over the fish and do the same with the left side. Repeat the folding with the second piece of fish.

Place both packets on a rimmed baking sheet (for even easier clean-up, line the baking sheet with foil). Note: You can make this up to one hour ahead of time and refrigerate until you're ready to bake. Bake 8 to 10 minutes.

Allow the packet to cool, then carefully open with scissors and serve with a side salad or your favorite grain.

Yield: 2 servings

More information: The Washington State Department of Health [has more about healthy ways to cook fish](#).

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