

# Cleaning & Prepping Fish

Cleaning fish is easy with the right tools and a little practice. Many fishing accesses and parks provide fish cleaning stations with water for rinsing fish. You can also clean fish on a dock, paddle, cooler lid, or flat rock.

Most anglers choose to fillet and skin crappie, bass, walleye, and carp. Some fish, such as the white bass and largemouth bass, have a strong-tasting dark layer of flesh along their lateral lines that should be cut away before cooking or storage.



## Tools

- Sharp knife (preferably a fillet knife)
- Scaler, dull knife, or spoon
- Glove to protect your hand and help grip the fish
- Newspaper (cleaning fish on newspaper will make clean-up easy)

## Pan-Dressing Fish

Remove the scales by scraping the skin with a dull knife, a spoon or an inexpensive scaling tool.

Pan-dress fish by cutting along the sides of the fins on the back and behind the stomach and pulling both of the fins out. Cut off the fish's head, and then slit the belly and scrape out the entrails.



## Filleting Fish

Fillet larger fish by cutting from behind the head and down to the backbone.

Slide the knife with a sawing motion toward the tail.

Slice out the rib bones from top to bottom.

Skin fillets by cutting down to the skin near the tail, turning the knife blade, and pulling firmly on the tail section.

Saw the knife between the skin and the flesh to separate them.

Watch the video below for some helpful tips on filleting a fish.

