Flavor of Maine

Sardine Secrets
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SARDINE FISHING AND CANNING

THE MAINE COAST. Early dawn. Waters lie calm in the lull between night and day. The slowly rising sun reflects on the shore, drying the rocks and sand, and chasing the morning mist up wooded hillsides.

The first gulls leave their rocky roosts and fly in search of breakfast. Their cries hang softly in the air—welcome music to a crew of sardine fishermen returning from the night’s catch.

These men work hard at night. It is then that the sardines rise from deeper water to feed near the surface; phosphorescence reveals them by the millions. The fishermen waste no time as they set their nets, for the little fish are constantly on the move.

Soon the school will be swimming about, entrapped in the nets, where they will remain until picked up by a boat from the cannery.

Sardine crews fish the Atlantic coast from New England to Labrador for the small, immature herring; but it is only in Maine and its Canadian neighbor, New Brunswick, that they are canned as sardines.

Although records of sardine fishing in Europe date back as far as 495 A.D., there is no way of knowing when the harvesting of this delectable little fish started in America. Early colonists found that Indian tribes along the North Atlantic coast had been harvesting herring for a long time in brush weirs or traps. They sometimes used torches to lure the fish into nets. Sardines were a staple part of their diet.

Today the little fish with the big flavor is recognized by nutrition experts as an excellent source of high-quality protein, minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients.

Sardines are one of the most abundant and important food fishes in the North Atlantic and especially the Gulf of Maine. In Maine alone, fishermen produce billions of the fish which go into about 200 million cans annually and are valued at more than $20 million. The first commercial United States canning operation was at Eastport, Maine, in 1871.

Maine fishermen are concerned with more than the history of their industry. They strive to produce an economical, high-quality catch that enables the State’s 23 modern canneries to supply well over 50 percent of the sardines consumed in the United States. They use ingenious methods to achieve this goal, such as spotting the schools in the daytime from airplanes and using depth recorders, sounding devices, and electronic scanners that sweep the ocean for miles around. New types of boats and gear are constantly being developed for either daytime or nighttime fishing.

The traditional methods of harvesting—stop seines which close off herring in a cove or harbor, purse seines that circle a school in open water, and weirs or traps which guide the fish into captivity—are still in use. Recently, larger than usual purse seine boats are being used.

In certain areas where conditions are favorable, an air-bubble method developed by the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Commercial Fisheries is often used. A curtain of bubbles formed by compressed air flowing through holes punched in a hose stretched along the ocean bottom serves as a barrier to schools and enables the fishermen to direct them to their nets.

Once caught, the sardines are pumped aboard a cannery carrier boat and rushed ashore for processing. The scales are automatically removed during the pumping operation and used to make artificial pearls, cosmetics, lacquers, and other products. As the fish go into the hold of the carrier, they are salted, thus beginning the processing during the run to the cannery.

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MAINE SARDINE PIZZA

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
2 packages (14 to 15 3/4 ounces each) cheese pizza

Drain sardines. Prepare pizza crust according to package directions. Cover crust with sauce. Top with sardines. Sprinkle cheeses over pizza. Bake in a hot oven, 425°F, for 20 to 25 minutes or until crust browns and cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

MAINE TOMATO SURPRISE

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
3/4 cup sliced celery
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1/4 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
2 tablespoons chopped ripe olives

Drain sardines and cut into large pieces. Combine celery, eggs, mayonnaise, olives, lemon juice, mustard, salt, and pepper. Add sardines and toss lightly. Chill. Cut each tomato into 5 or 6 sections almost to stem end and spread apart slightly. Fill each tomato with sardine salad. Serve on salad greens. Makes 6 servings.

FRENCH TOASTED SARDINE SANDWICH

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons chopped sweet pickle
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or salad dressing

Drain sardines and flake. Combine celery, onion, pickle, mayonnaise, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and sardines. Spread 6 slices of bread with sardine mixture. Cover with remaining 6 slices of bread. Combine milk and egg in a pie plate. Dip each sandwich in egg mixture and then in potato chips. Fry in hot fat at moderate heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until brown. Turn carefully. Fry 4 to 5 minutes longer or until brown. Makes 6 servings.
SARDINES ON A ROLL

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1 cup catsup
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion
1 1/2 teaspoons oregano
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
6 hamburger rolls
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
1 1/2 cups shredded cheese

Drain sardines and cut into large pieces. Combine catsup, onion, oregano, and garlic powder. Mix thoroughly. Cut rolls in half and spread with butter. Place rolls on a cookie sheet, 15 x 12 inches. Toast rolls. Place sardines on rolls and cover with catsup mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 10 to 15 minutes or until cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

MAINE SARDINE OLIVE SANDWICH

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
3/4 cup sliced stuffed olives
3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1/4 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 tablespoon horseradish
Dash pepper
12 slices buttered cracked wheat bread
6 lettuce leaves

Drain sardines and split in half lengthwise. Combine olives, eggs, mayonnaise, horseradish, and pepper. Spread 6 slices bread with olive mixture. Place sardines on top. Cover with lettuce and remaining 6 slices bread. Makes 6 servings.

SARDINE SKYSCRAPER SANDWICH

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
12 slices bacon
4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
1/4 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
3/4 cup Thousand Island dressing
18 slices toast
3 dill pickles, sliced lengthwise
6 lettuce leaves

MAINE SARDINE SUBMARINE SANDWICH

3 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each)
Maine sardines
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
1½ teaspoons prepared mustard
3 submarine rolls, 12 inches each

6 lettuce leaves
2 tomatoes, thinly sliced
Salt
6 slices cheese
Mustard Sauce
½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing


Mustard Sauce

½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
2 teaspoons pickle juice
Dash liquid hot pepper sauce
2 tablespoons prepared mustard

Combine all ingredients. Makes approximately ¾ cup sauce.
BOHEMIAN SALAD

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each)
Maine sardines
1 package (10 ounces) frozen peas and carrots
1 can (1 pound) cut green beans, drained
1 cup sliced celery

Maine sardines

1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped green pepper
1 tablespoon chopped pimiento
Marinade

6 lettuce cups
Pimiento strips


Marinade

1/2 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup salad oil
1 tablespoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper

Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly. Makes approximately 3/4 cup marinade.

MAINE SARDINE COLE SLAW

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each)
Maine sardines
4 cups shredded cabbage
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped parsley
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

Cole Slaw Dressing

Salad greens
Paprika

Drain sardines and cut into large pieces. Combine cabbage, onion, parsley, eggs, and dressing. Arrange on salad greens. Top with sardines and sprinkle with paprika. Makes 6 servings.

Cole Slaw Dressing

1/2 cup salad oil
3 tablespoons vinegar
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper
1 tablespoon chopped pimiento
1 tablespoon chopped sweet pickle
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon paprika
Dash cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly. Makes approximately 3/4 cup dressing.
MAINE SARDINE CAESAR SALAD

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1 clove garlic, peeled and quartered
1/2 cup salad oil
1 1/2 cups croutons
1 small onion, thinly sliced

8 cups salad greens
1/2 teaspoon salt
Dash pepper
1 egg, cooked 1 minute
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tomatoes, cut in wedges

Drain sardines and cut into large pieces. Add garlic to oil and let stand at least 1 hour. Remove garlic from oil. Gradually pour 1/4 cup of garlic oil over croutons, mixing lightly until all of the oil is absorbed. Separate onion slices into rings. Combine onion rings, salad greens, salt, and pepper. Pour remaining 1/4 cup of garlic oil over salad greens. Toss lightly. Break egg into salad. Add lemon juice and mix thoroughly. Add cheese, croutons, and sardines. Toss lightly. Garnish with tomato wedges. Makes 6 servings.

MAINE SARDINE SALAD BOWL

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
4 ounces cheese
4 ounces ham

6 cups salad greens
3 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
Russian dressing

Drain sardines and cut into large pieces. Cut cheese and ham into julienne strips. Combine salad greens, cheese, ham, and sardines. Garnish with egg slices. Serve with dressing. Makes 6 servings.
MAINE SARDINE RAREBIT

3 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
4 slices bacon, chopped
½ cup chopped green pepper
½ cup chopped onion
1 can (10½ ounces) condensed tomato soup
1 cup shredded cheese
¼ cup half and half cream
½ teaspoon prepared mustard
6 slices toast


MAINE SARDINE DIP

1 can (3¾ or 4 ounces) Maine sardines
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 tablespoon milk
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1½ tablespoons lemon juice


MAINE SARDINE CANAPES

3 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
½ cup butter or margarine, softened
2 tablespoons prepared mustard
10 slices sandwich bread
Pimiento strips


CRISPY FRIED MAINE SARDINES

4 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines in tomato sauce
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
1 cup dry bread crumbs

SARDINE 'N' BACON SNACKS

3 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines in mustard sauce
1 tablespoon mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 teaspoon grated onion
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Dash cayenne pepper
20 slices bacon, cut in thirds

Mash sardines in sauce. Combine all ingredients except bacon. Place approximately 1 teaspoonful of sardine mixture on each piece of bacon. Roll and fasten with a toothpick. Place snacks on a broiler pan. Broil about 4 inches from source of heat for 10 to 15 minutes or until bacon is crisp. Turn carefully. Broil 4 to 5 minutes longer or until bacon is crisp. Makes approximately 60 snacks.

COUNTRY STYLE MAINE SARDINES

2 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
3 cups seasoned mashed potatoes
2 tomatoes, thinly sliced
Salt
Pepper
1 cup shredded cheese

Drain sardines. Add parsley to potatoes and mix thoroughly. Spread potatoes in the bottom of a well-greased baking dish, 8 x 8 x 2 inches. Arrange sardines over potatoes. Cover with tomato slices. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with cheese. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until heated and cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

GOLDEN BROWN SARDINE APPETIZERS

3 cans (3¾ or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1 bouillon cube
½ cup boiling water
1 cup dry bread crumbs
1 egg, beaten
¼ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
¼ cup finely chopped onion
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 tablespoon prepared mustard
½ teaspoon poultry seasoning
¾ cup cereal crumbs

Drain sardines and flake. Dissolve bouillon cube in boiling water. Combine all ingredients except cereal crumbs. Shape into small balls and roll in crumbs. Place on a well-greased cookie sheet, 15 x 12 inches. Bake in a very hot oven, 450° F., for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown. Makes approximately 45 appetizers.
PLANKED MAINE SARDINES

4 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1 can (4 ounces) sliced mushrooms, drained
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
3 cups seasoned mashed potatoes

1 can (1 pound) whole carrots, drained
1 can (1 pound) whole onions, drained
1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted
1/4 cup chopped parsley


OPEN FACE SARDINE SANDWICH

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines
1 medium onion, thinly sliced

3 tomatoes, thinly sliced
6 large slices buttered rye bread

Drain sardines and split in half lengthwise. Separate onion slices into rings. Place sardines on bread. Cover with tomato slices and onion rings. Top each sandwich with dressing. Makes 6 servings.
MAINE FISHERMAN POTATOES AU GRATIN

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines 1 cup shredded cheese
2 tablespoons chopped onion 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons melted fat or oil 5 cups sliced cooked potatoes
2 tablespoons flour 3/4 cup soft bread cubes
1 teaspoon salt 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
Dash pepper Paprika

Drain sardines. Cook onion in fat until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings. Add milk gradually and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add cheese and Worcestershire sauce. Stir until cheese melts. Arrange half the potatoes in a well-greased, 1 1/2 quart casserole. Cover with sardines and remaining potatoes. Pour sauce over potatoes. Toss bread cubes with butter and sprinkle over top of casserole. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 6 servings.

SARDINE CHEESE TOASTWICH

2 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines in mustard sauce 6 slices bread
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened 6 slices cheese Paprika

Drain sardines and reserve sauce. Split sardines in half lengthwise. Combine butter and 1 teaspoon sardine mustard sauce. Spread bread with mustard-butter. Place sardines on bread and cover with cheese. Sprinkle with paprika. Place sandwiches on a cookie sheet, 15 x 12 inches. Bake in a very hot oven, 450° F., for 8 to 10 minutes or until cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

MARINATED MAINE SARDINES

3 cans (3 3/4 or 4 ounces each) Maine sardines 1 clove garlic, crushed
3/4 cup sour cream 1/2 teaspoon horseradish
1/4 cup half and half cream 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup tarragon vinegar 1/2 cup thinly sliced peeled cucumber
2 tablespoons lemon juice 6 lettuce cups Paprika
2 tablespoons dry white wine, optional

DELUXE MAINE SARDINE SANDWICH

3 cans (3⅓ or 4 ounces each) 6 frankfurter rolls
Maine sardines 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
3 cups thinly sliced onions 6 slices Swiss cheese
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

Drain sardines and split in half lengthwise. Cook onion in butter until tender. Cut rolls almost in half lengthwise. Place opened rolls on a cookie sheet, 15 x 12 inches. Spread both halves of rolls with mustard and top with sardines. Spread onions over sardines. Place cheese on top. Bake in a hot oven, 425° F., for 12 to 15 minutes or until cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

MAINE SARDINE ANTIPASTO

3 cans (3⅓ or 4 ounces each) Celery sticks
Maine sardines Cucumber slices
2 cans (4 ounces each) button Green pepper rings
mushrooms, drained Olives
Marinade Radish roses
Lettuce Tomato wedges

Drain sardines. Place sardines and mushrooms in a shallow baking dish. Pour marinade over sardines and mushrooms and chill for at least 30 minutes. Remove sardines and mushrooms from marinade, reserving marinade. Cover a large platter or tray with lettuce. Arrange all ingredients, except marinade, on lettuce. Serve with Marinade. Makes 6 servings.

Marinade

½ cup Italian dressing 1 clove garlic, crushed
¼ cup soy sauce Dash powdered ginger
2 tablespoons water Dash pepper
2 tablespoons wine vinegar

Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly. Makes approximately 1 cup marinade.
Sardine Fishing and Canning

Before the fish are unloaded, a State inspector has to approve their quality and condition. Once the sardines pass this rigid test, they are pumped into the cannery holding tanks to await their turn on the production line—seldom more than an hour or two.

From the tanks, the fish are taken by conveyors for washing and precooking. The next step is the packing line, where skilled women workers remove the heads and tails and pack the fish in cans. The rapid, accurate, and careful manipulation of hands and fingers is a picture of dexterity.

Next, the cans of firmly packed fish go by conveyor belt to high-speed machines that add oil or sauces. Covers are then applied, and the cans firmly sealed. The filled cans next go into retorts for final cooking and sterilization.

The canned sardines are removed from the retorts and put into huge bins, where they are inspected for defects and then placed in unsealed shipping cases. Labels may be applied before the cans are cased. Before the sardines are sent to market, a representative sample of each lot is sent to a State of Maine laboratory for a final inspection of quality, appearance, and flavor. Constant State inspection is also maintained during each step of the processing operation.

The final step in flavorful eating is all yours. Try a can of Maine sardines—pull tab, key, or regular cover style. You will never regret putting a little bit of Maine, the FLAVOR OF MAINE, on your table.

A 14-minute, sound, color, 16mm motion picture, "Flavor of Maine" may be borrowed free of charge by writing to Audio-Visual Services, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240. The motion pictures "It's the Maine Sardine", running 20 minutes and "Sardines From Maine Down East Style", running 14 minutes, both in sound and color, are also available on loan, free of charge, by writing to the same address.
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Stewart L. Udall, Secretary

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, Clarence F. Pautzke, Commissioner
BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES, Harold E. Crowther, Director

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.

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AND THE MAINE SARDINE COUNCIL AS PART OF A
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