

47.—SOME RECIPES FOR COOKING FISH.*

ROE CHEESE.—The fishermen of the Dardanelles prepare a kind of cheese from the roe of several kinds of fish by drying it in the air and then pressing it. By dipping it in melted wax a crust is formed over it, which prevents its being affected by the air. Inside this crust the roe undergoes a sort of fermentation, giving it a very piquant flavor, so much so, in fact, that one can eat but little of it at a time. It is said to taste like a mixture of fine sardines, caviare, and old cheese. Before it is eaten the crust of wax is taken off, and if it has become moldy—which frequently happens—it is soaked in strong vinegar.

COOKING FISH.—The Paris Figaro recommends to cook fresh-water fish in a mixture of white wine and water; and salt-water fish in a mixture of water and milk, equal parts, seasoning with salt and pepper.

COOKING FISH IN FAT.—While boiling water, which evaporates freely, keeps a steady temperature of about 212° F., fat can be brought up to a much higher temperature, as its boiling point is about 600° F. For every-day use it is sufficient to heat it to about 400° F. When fish are thrown into such fat a dry, brown crust forms round them immediately, inside of which the meat is soon cooked. The difference between fish cooked in this way and fish fried in a frying-pan is, that the latter, by absorbing a great quantity of fat, lose by evaporation a good deal of the water contained in them, whereby they are fried unevenly and apt to get burned; while the former, owing to the quickly-forming crust, neither absorb the fat nor lose any of their strength. The best fat for this purpose is beef fat, but mutton fat can also be used, after first having been cooked in milk. Olive oil may also be used. Butter, on the other hand, should not be used, partly on account of the water contained in it, and partly because the caseine, when exposed to heat for any length of time, is apt to burn and make it dark.

Beef fat may be prepared by chopping it up in small pieces and boiling it in water until the water has evaporated, all the fat has been rendered, and the threads have become brown and hard. To prevent its burning, it should frequently be stirred after the water has evaporated. The fat is then strained through a cloth and is ready for use.

The following, however, is a better method: After the fat has been chopped fine, it is boiled in water for a quarter of an hour, taken up, and the water squeezed out, whereupon it is again boiled in water for from one-half to one hour. While still hot it is strained through a cloth. When cold the fat will form a cake on the top. The lower side is cleaned, and the fat is melted once more in order to remove any water which it may still contain.

To use the fat a sufficient quantity is placed in a deep pan, not porcelain lined, however, as the porcelain frequently cracks on account of

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the heat. The fat does not bubble. When a thin bluish steam begins to show itself, or when a drop of water thrown on the fat immediately evaporates with a crackling sound, it has the required temperature. The degree of heat may also be ascertained by sticking the tail of the fish into the fat. If the fat is hot enough the tail becomes brown and brittle in a few seconds. The pieces of fish thrown into the fat first sink to the bottom, but soon rise again. When they are sufficiently brown they are taken out and laid on a perforated board, so that the fat can run off. They should be served immediately, and should not be covered, as the crust soon loses its brittleness. When the fat is not burned it can be used a number of times. If the fish has been rolled in bread, cracker-crumbs, eggs, &c., the fat should be strained every time before it is returned to the vessel in which it is kept, or poured into water, where the impurities will either sink to the bottom or gather at the bottom of the cake of fat, when they can be scraped off.

COOKING PIKE: A RECEIPT FROM THE YEAR 1648.—Take a large pike, make a slit in its belly and take out the entrails with the exception of the liver. Scale and salt the front and hind parts, but leave the scales on the middle part. Lay it in vinegar, so that it gets a nice blue color; then stick it on a spit. Take a clean cloth soaked in wine and tie it around the middle part tightly enough to prevent the fat, with which the two other parts are basted, from entering the middle part. When the fish is on the spit, a mixture, half wine and half water, should be poured on the cloth as soon as it begins to get dry. The front part of the pike should be sprinkled with flour; then hot butter should be poured over it; then again flour, &c., until it is deemed sufficient. The hind part should be sprinkled with ginger and salt, and hot butter should be poured on it from time to time until it is well baked. Care should be taken in putting the fish on the spit, so that it does not break. When ready, serve the fish whole on a flat dish.

SOAKED FISH WITH GREEN PEAS.—After the fish has been well beaten with a wooden mallet, lay it for several days in strong lye, and then in soft water, until it has become completely soaked. Before it is used it should be soaked for a good while in warm salt water, but not boiled. The peas are cooked in a little water with salt and butter, a little flour is added, and they are boiled up once more with chopped parsley.

FRESH HERRING WITH BROWN SAUCE.—The herring are cleaned and sprinkled with salt half an hour before they are used. They are then dried in a cloth, rolled in flour or bread-crumbs, and fried in butter or lard. For the sauce take a medium-sized onion, about $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of lean bacon, some pepper ground fine, a table-spoonful of flour, and two table-spoonfuls of good vinegar. The onion is chopped fine and steamed until it has become quite soft, and the bacon is added cut in small cubes; finally the flour is stirred in. Then add 1 pint of water, and boil the whole until you have an evenly thick brown sauce, which is poured over the fish.