



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



A pair of polarized sunglasses are beneficial during sunny winter days because of the light reflected by snow. Using polarized lenses while fishing allows you to see fish and structure in the water. Polarized sunglasses also offer protection from harmful ultraviolet rays and unintended contact with objects that may occur during fishing.

Winter steelhead fishing on Lake Erie's tributaries often means encountering areas of flowing or stationary ice that prevents casting to desired water. Often, the only open water is found at harder to reach, mid-stream flows. The reach provided by a long rod is invaluable to stretch over the icy regions, so baits or flies may be dropped into the mid-stream flow. "High sticking" (rod raised high) and swinging offerings submerged in the current at a speed matching the flow usually provides the desired fishing action.

Now is the time to perform maintenance to fishing reels. If you have never done so, disassembly is usually limited to unscrewing a few screws, so a side cover may be removed. Inside, a few wearing parts may be observed (gears, levers, and sometimes springs) that enable the mechanism to work flawlessly when in good condition. These parts will last longer and perform better if kept clean and well lubricated. Performing this quick maintenance annually is adequate. Numerous dedicated

lubricants are available at most discount and sporting outlets that will serve the task well. Disassembly over an old, white cloth is helpful if you drop one of the small parts.

Avoid fishing alone during winter. Safety should always be a priority. This is not a time for solitude on the water. If your fishing buddies cannot accompany you, choose to fish locations where a moderate number of people are likely to be. You will want someone to notice if you slip into even shallow water. Anglers should keep extra clothes in their vehicle this time of year. If it becomes necessary, change into dry garments as quickly as possible.

If you are a hunter in possession of a portable, pop up game blind, you are also the proud owner of an ice-fishing shelter. Most game blinds are light, easy to transport, simple to put up, and quick to tear down at the end of the day. You will likely find the same list of positive points listed by the manufacturers promoting their dedicated, ice fishing shelters. Depending on the weight and ease to carry, a sled may be necessary to scoot the shelter across the ice, but most ice fishing anglers prefer using a sled to carry other items onto the ice.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Italian Style Baked Pike

by Wayne Phillips

Baking pike fillets smothered in tomato sauce and covered in mozzarella cheese will make many happy diners.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 1 Tbsp. olive or canola oil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 4 6-ounce boneless, skinless pike fillets
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Coat the bottom of a baking dish with oil. Season the pike fillets with salt and black pepper. Place the fillets in the baking dish. Add oregano to the tomato sauce and spoon on top of the pike fillets. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese on top. Bake in a 350 degree F oven until the cheese has melted and the pike is cooked through, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Serve

Serve on a bed of penne or ziti that has been tossed with extra tomato sauce. Place cooked fillets on top of the pasta.

Tips

Be generous with the shredded mozzarella cheese. It gives the fish a gooey crust. If there is any extra tomato sauce and cheese in the baking dish, put it on the pasta before the baked fillets.

Use your favorite tomato-based pasta sauce, either homemade or store bought. Adding a bit of oregano to the sauce gives it a special taste. Many recipes suggest not using cheese with fish. Mozzarella cheese is mild, so it does not overpower the pike. Grate the mozzarella cheese, so it melts evenly. Use fresh mozzarella cheese for an extra tasty dish.



photo-Wayne Phillips