



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Having been raised in Erie County, I'm well aware that some of the best steelhead fishing in the world occurs in the big lake's tributaries during the months of November and December. Skein (group of fish eggs) is usually the bait of choice for traditional anglers, and sucker spawn is the most widely used lure by fly anglers, but wise anglers never allow themselves to get so addicted to any one bait that they refuse to consider alternatives.

During winter in Pennsylvania, smallmouth bass are accessible and remain cooperative for stream anglers until the waterways freeze over, and though slightly less active, largemouth bass seldom ignore baits dropped nearby.

More than one literary source has proclaimed the Allegheny River may be the top provider of trophy walleye fishing in the eastern United States during the winter months. A 15-pound, 4-ounce trophy was pulled from this river in December, 2003. The third largest walleye on record from those waters that year was caught in January,

and numerous walleyes exceeding 10 pounds continue to be lured from the Allegheny River every winter.

Special regulations waterways hold trout year round in the Keystone State.

Additionally, several Pennsylvania streams are stocked just before winter really takes hold, boosting the numbers of hard-fighting fish accessible to anglers throughout the winter months.

Grubs are hearty, natural bait that hold up well when used to catch winter fish. The larvae remain firm when pierced, and a single grub often holds well enough to account for numerous caught fish. That's a welcome benefit to anglers reluctant to remove dry, warm hands from cozy pockets.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Puff Pastry Patty Shells with Basil Pesto Mayonnaise and Poached Trout

by Wayne Phillips

For appetizers this holiday season, serve puff pastry rounds filled with basil pesto mayonnaise and poached trout.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 6 frozen puff pastry patty shells
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 12 ounces rainbow trout
- 2 Tbsp. basil pesto
- 1/3 cup basil pesto
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Bake the pastry rounds according to the package directions. When cool, slice each round in half to make 12 rounds. Poach the rainbow trout in white wine over a bed of sliced onions, garlic and lemons. Once cool, break the rainbow trout into bite-sized pieces. Mix 1/3 cup basil pesto with mayonnaise. Spread the mixture over the pastry rounds. Place 1 ounce of poached trout on each round, and drizzle with 2 Tbsp. of basil pesto.

Serve

If you prefer, you can garnish the rounds with julienned fresh basil or flat leaf Italian parsley rather than pesto. Serve them slightly chilled with either chilled champagne or sauvignon blanc for a real festive treat.



photo-Wayne Phillips

Hints

Poaching the rainbow trout in wine gives it an exotic taste. Feel free to add your favorite herb to the poaching liquid. Try keeping the trout in bite-sized pieces rather than breaking it up into small pieces. If you want a milder pesto taste, simply add more mayonnaise.

When baked, the puff pastry patty shells are quite thick. By cutting them in half, you end up with two thinner crispy shells that have a small pocket perfect for filling with the basil mayonnaise and trout pieces. This makes for a much nicer presentation that can be eaten out of hand or served on a small plate.