



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Some ice anglers carry only a 5-gallon bucket, a few small fishing rods and jigs and a manual ice auger. Other anglers bring an ice fishing shelter, heater and motorized auger. Many ice fishing shelters are manufactured with hard-plastic floors formed into sled shapes, which helps transport equipment. Augers, hooks and other gear may pierce expensive materials. Therefore, many anglers choose to transport gear in sleds.

If an ice fishing angler does not own an ice fishing shelter, it is important for the angler to wear clothing that blocks mist and wind. Add a hard shell, hooded jacket to your ice fishing wardrobe.

Tear drop jigs are hard to beat when ice fishing for panfish in water that is 15 feet deep or less. Tear drop jigs are small and unobtrusive, yet heavy enough to reach the bottom in relatively still water. Tear drop jigs can be tipped with waxworms, red worms, meal worms or minnows. Tear drop jigs are available in many colors, allowing anglers to discover which color attracts panfish in different lighting.

Perch are voracious feeders often targeted by ice anglers. Perch are schooling fish—if you catch one perch, there may be more of these fish nearby. Perch can be found early in the season around weeds growing below the ice in water that is 15 feet deep or less. As temperature decreases and weeds diminish, perch are likely to move into deeper water

or drop-offs bordering deeper water. Perch schools roam as they hunt, sometimes making their whereabouts difficult to predict. However, sometimes schools of perch can be lured to an area. Bounce heavy, chrome lures and oversized weights off the bottom to disturb sediment along the floor. After stirring up the bottom for several minutes, switch to an appropriately sized jig tipped with live bait. Minnows are often the chosen bait by winter perch.

Sometimes, steelhead fishing is so good, it seems unbelievable. During those times, anglers should consider the amount of photographs taken. After obtaining an adequate number of trophy fish photographs, resist the temptation to needlessly handle more fish. Fish have a greater opportunity to survive catch and release tactics if left in the water during hook removal and allowed to swim back without being hoisted.

During winter months, there is little advantage to fishing early in the morning when conditions are the coldest. Gamefish are typically more active when the sun warms the water at least 1- to 2-degrees F during this time of year. According to author and fly fishing expert Tom Rosenbauer, “Winter’s fly anglers will see the most activity mid-afternoon on sunny days, or surprisingly, all day long on gray days absent of wind.” Another benefit of fly fishing after temperatures reach at least 30 degrees F is the reduced icing of rod ferrules.

Fishin’ from the Kitchen

Walleye Pie Topped with Butternut Squash

by Wayne Phillips

Nothing takes away the chill like a rich Walleye pie topped with creamy butternut squash.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 12- to 16-ounces cubed boneless, skinless Walleye fillets
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp minced fresh herbs (dill, tarragon or thyme)
- 1 butternut squash, baked and mashed with butter and milk
- 2 cups basic white sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Bake butternut squash in a 350-degree F oven until soft. Remove the flesh and mash with a little butter and milk. Over medium heat, sauté onion, peas, carrots, corn, garlic and Walleye in butter until cooked. Remove from heat. Make the white sauce, and add the sauce to the fish mixture. Season with herbs, salt

and black pepper. Place in a casserole dish. Spread the mashed butternut squash over the top. Bake in a 350-degree F oven until bubbling, about 15- to 20-minutes.

Serve

Make this recipe in either a large casserole dish or individual small casseroles. Serve with a green salad and a hearty, crusty bread like ciabatta or dark rye.

Tips

Margarine may be used instead of butter. For a richer white sauce, replace some of the milk with cream or half-and-half.

There are many other toppings for fish pies. Stronger fish flavors can stand up to rutabaga. Yams or sweet potatoes provide richness. For wild color, try blue potatoes mashed with sour cream. There are other types of squash, but butternut has a rich, buttery taste.

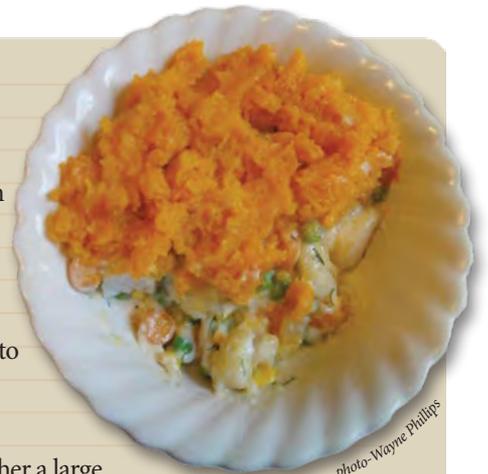


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