TROUT FILLETING

By TubeDude

Once you master the basic arts of filleting you can learn to fillet trout. You need sharp knives and a deft touch. Trout flesh is delicate and will just get smashed by dull blades or clumsy handling. The key to success is to practice…with good knives…until you can turn out good skinless and boneless fillets every time.

Filleting trout is different than filleting perch, walleye, bass or other warm water species. You also need to add an extra step. Once you have removed the slabs of flesh from the vertebral column you need to slice out the row of fine flesh bones. These pesky little things run up into the flesh along the spine. It is a little extra work, but the end result is so much better you will be glad you did it. You will appreciate the difference in the enjoyment of eating trout and being able to use them in different recipes by having no little pesky bones to worry about.



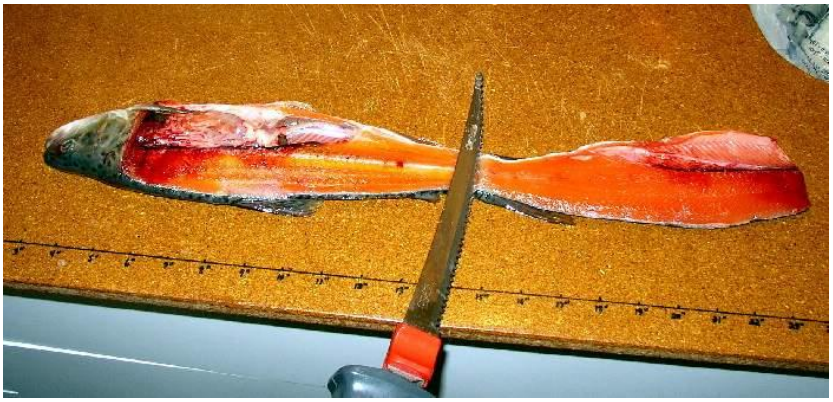
STEP 1: First get some trout. Any trout over about 10 – 12 inches can be filleted effectively. I use an electric knife for the basic filleting cuts, because it is much easier than using blade fillet knives, and usually produces more efficient fillets from the delicate flesh of the trout.



STEP 2: Begin by making a cut straight down behind the gills, until you reach the spine.



STEP 3: When your blade (standard or electric) reaches the spine, rotate it 90 degrees, toward the tail, and begin cutting the fillet away from the spine. Be sure to keep the blade absolutely flat…parallel to the surface of the cutting board. Move the knife slowly and firmly to avoid slipping and ruinina the fillet.



STEP 4: Stop cutting before severing the final bit of skin at the tail. Flip the fillet over onto the skin side, still attached to the carcass, and prepare to start skinning the fillet.



STEP 5: Remove the skin from the fillet by running the knife between the flesh and the skin. Hold the blade down against the fillet board and keep it flat. Otherwise you will either leave meat attached to the skin, or cut through the skin before completing the skinning process.



STEP 6: Slice out the rib cage from the skinless fillet. Use a thin sharp blade to make a shallow slice. It is better to make a series of short slicing cuts than to just hack it out.



STEP 7: Remove and discard the thin bit of flesh containing the rib bones.



STEP 8: Using the tip of your index finger, feel along the length of the fillet to identify and locate the tips of the little "flesh bones" that remain in the fillet after removing it from the spine of the fish. By rubbing them a couple of times, you can often make them stand up and become more visible, for the removal process.



STEP 9: Using the thin sharp blade, make 2 parallel cuts, one on each side of the row of flesh bones, cutting clear through to the board. The bones run only about 2/3 of the way down the fillet, from the head, so you do not need to cut all the way down.



STEP 10: Lift out and discard the thin slice of flesh containing the tiny bones. Run your finger along the edges of the cuts left by the removal process, to make sure you did not miss any bones. "Leftovers" can be easily pulled out with pliers, fingernails or cut out with the knife. The remaining skinless and boneless fillet makes for some worry free munchina.



Prepped for the oven. Fillets are arranged on a foil lined baking tray. A glass baking dish works well too. Flavor the fillets with your choice of salts, peppers, garlic, lemon, sesame seeds or other seasonings. You may also add shrimp or clams. Finish by dotting generously with butter.



Fresh out of a 350 degree oven, for about 15 – 20 minutes…until flaky. Pour off the buttery juices into a container and spoon back over the fillets when served. Good to serve with noodles or rice. Use fresh bread or cornbread to sop up the leftover juices.