"When the wind is in the West, that's the time that fish'n's best," goes part of an old saying among weatherwise fishermen. If you are a fisherman, you know the thrill of the catch and the pleasure of eating a freshly-caught fish. And you also know that as soon as that fish leaves the water, it begins to deteriorate. Of all flesh foods, fish is the most susceptible to oxidation and hydrolysis (breakdown) of fats and to microbial spoilage. PROMPT treatment is necessary to preserve it by any means.

You can't drag dead fish on a stringer behind the boat for several hours and then expect them to have an excellent flavor later in the day. Fish are like any other kind of food. CARE must be given to preserve the flavor and keep them from spoiling.

In general, small fish are more perishable than larger ones, and deterioration in dressed fish is slower than in whole fish, but the latter are spoiled more readily by bacteria. Also, these changes occur more rapidly at summer temperatures and more slowly as the temperature is lowered toward freezing.
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Strong tasting fish generally means improperly cared for fish. Fish should be cleaned and chilled as quickly as possible after the catch. In warm weather, once the water temperature has warmed up considerably, it is best for safety and quality of the fish to clean them right after they are caught and place them on ice in a cooler carried for that purpose. A good idea is to carry plastic bags for the fish fillets to hold in natural flavor and juices.

Wash the fillets with cold water. To preserve the tasty juices and keep meat in its firm, natural state, avoid overwashing—do not flood with a hard running faucet or hose. Fillets can easily be dried with a cloth or paper towel.

A good sharp knife can last a lifetime with proper care. To do its job, it must be kept sharp. Electrical and mechanical knife sharpeners will quickly give your knife a good cutting edge, but it will rapidly wear away. Although it takes more time and skill, the sharpening stone (or hone) is the most effective. This is especially true when the task is completed with a few strokes on a butcher’s steel to set the blade’s fresh edge.

Ihe either a wet or dry stone. Either water or a drop of salad oil on the stone helps float away the metal particles and cut a finer edge. Work slowly and deliberately.

To avoid warping the handle, never let a knife with a wooden handle stand in water. Always dry your knife after rinsing and store separately in a dry scabbard.
1. Make a cut down to backbone just behind gills. Turn knife and slice straight along backbone, not quite to tail.

2. Cut along each side of the anal and dorsal fins for length of fish. (This step is unnecessary for small fish.)

3. Flip fillet away from body of fish. Remove rib section by inserting blade close to tail end of rib bones and shave entire section away.

4. To remove skin, grip body of fish with one hand. With knife in free hand, insert blade between skin and meat close to tail. Draw along fish to free fillet.

5. The cheeks are the "Fillet Mignon" of the fish. For larger fish (only) slice into the cheeks and scoop out with blower. Peel off skin.

...Repeat steps 2-5 for other side of fish...