

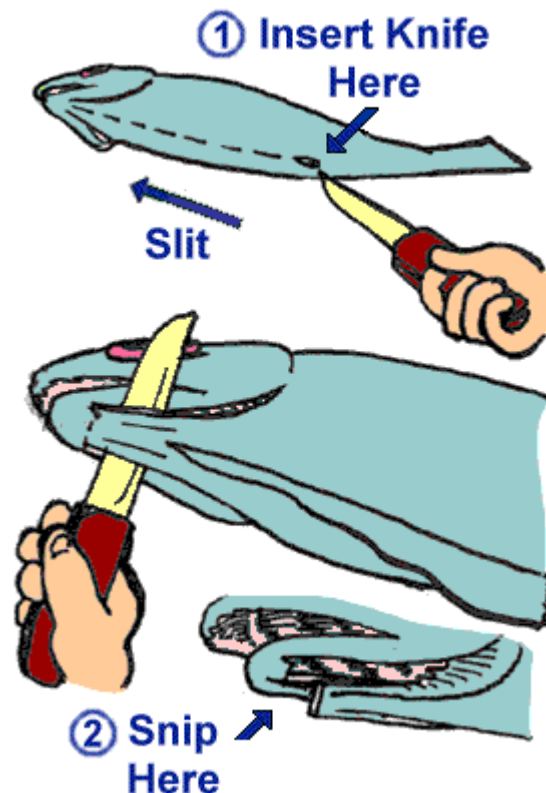
How To Clean A Fish

After the catching, or even the buying, there are a few steps between the lake and your plate. While not for the eternally queasy, cleaning a fish is not as messy as one might think. And don't worry about the guts. It's part of the full fishy experience. Cover your work area with plenty of newspaper or heavy paper bags. Have a plastic bag handy for the guts, bones, etc. Make sure to seal them well before disposing.

Step 1: Prepare the body

First, wash the fish in cool running water to remove any slime. With a sharp knife, cut off the pectoral fins on both sides of the fish. Not all fish need scaling. If you're not sure, run the blade of the blunt knife at almost a 90 degree angle to the body from tail end to head. If the scales are thick and come up easily, you need to remove them. Continue until the body is smooth.

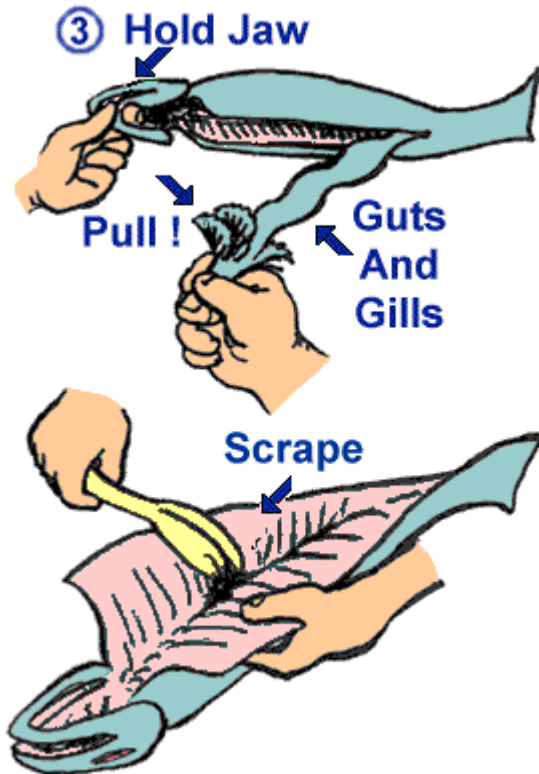
Step 2: Gut the fish



Using the sharp knife, drive the blade point into the vent (small anal opening near the tail, where the body begins to widen). Cut right through the belly all the way to the gills. Remove the guts from the cavity. With the spoon, scoop out the dark reddish-brown kidney line that lies along the backbone. Important: Cut out all parts of the gills.

Step 3: Remove Head and Tail

Cut the head off right below the gills. Cut the tail where it joins the body.



Step 4: Remove Dorsal Fin and Bones

Cut along the length of each side of the dorsal fin (top) of the fish. Remove the dorsal fin and connected bones by giving a quick pull from tail end to head. This step is not essential, but eliminates those tiny, annoying bones that can ruin a meal.



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