

Best North Carolina Fish Stew: Hearty & Flavorful Recipe

Step into the comforting world of Southern coastal cooking with this incredible



TIME
8 to 10 min

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INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound thick-cut bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
3 pounds white potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 8 cups)
2 pounds yellow onions, chopped (about 7 cups)
3 pounds firm fish such as rockfish, red drum, or sheepshead fillets, sliced into about 3-inch pieces
1 (10 3/4 ounce) can condensed tomato soup
2 cans (6 oz each) tomato paste
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning
Pinch red pepper flakes (about 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon, adjust to taste)
5 cups water, approximately (enough to cover ingredients)
6 large eggs

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get this delicious NC : Old Fashioned Fish Stew simmering!
2. Cook : Bacon: In an 8 to 10-quart Dutch oven or heavy pot (a 10-quart is recommended for ample space), cook the 1/2 pound thick-cut bacon pieces over medium heat for about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until they are crisp. Turn off the heat. Remove the cooked bacon with a slotted spoon and place it on a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Set the crispy bacon aside for garnish or to mix in at the end. Leave the rendered bacon fat in the pot.
3. Layer : Ingredients (No Stirring!): In the pot, directly over the bacon fat, add the ingredients in specific layers (do not stir at this point to prevent breaking up the fish): First, add the 3 pounds peeled and cut white potatoes evenly.
4. Next, add the 2 pounds chopped yellow onions evenly over the potatoes.
5. Finally, arrange the 3 pounds of firm fish fillets, sliced into about 3-inch pieces, on top of the onions.
6. Add : Liquids & Seasonings (No Stirring!): Pour the 1 (10 3/4 ounce) can condensed tomato soup and 2 cans tomato paste evenly over the layered ingredients. Sprinkle the 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning, and a pinch of red pepper flakes over the top. Add just enough water to completely cover all the ingredients (approximately 5 cups, but adjust as needed). Do not stir the contents of the pot.
7. Boil & : Simmer: Bring the pot to a boil over medium-high heat. Once it reaches a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a gentle boil or high simmer (medium

to medium-low heat). Cover the pot and cook for 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork-tender (but still holding their shape) and the fish is fully cooked and opaque.

8. **Add : Eggs:** Next, while the stew is still at a gentle boil, crack the 6 large eggs one at a time and carefully drop the raw eggs directly into the stew in a single layer on top. Cook until the eggs are fully cooked to your liking, about 5 minutes. The eggs will naturally break up into chunks while they're cooking.
9. **Final : Seasoning & Serve:** Season the stew with additional salt, black pepper, Old Bay Seasoning, and/or red pepper flakes, if desired, to taste. Return the reserved crispy bacon to the stew, or serve it topped with the bacon bits. Serve hot.

SWAPS & NOTES

Fish: Firm, white-fleshed fish is best for this stew as it holds its shape during simmering.

Rockfish (striped bass), red drum, or sheepshead are traditional.

Cod, snapper, or even firm tilapia can be used as alternatives.

Bacon: Thick-cut bacon provides plenty of flavorful fat.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Do NOT Stir While Cooking: This is a crucial instruction.

Stirring will cause the fish and potatoes to break apart into a mush.

The layering and simmering method ensures even cooking without agitation.

Fish Type Matters: Use a firm-fleshed white fish that will hold its shape during simmering.

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