

Authentic NC Old-Fashioned Fish Stew: A Southern Classic

There are some dishes that just transport you, and for me, a bowl of



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 white 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 tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 5 cups water (approximately)
- 6 large eggs

DIRECTIONS

1. Follow these steps to create your hearty and flavorful NC Old-Fashioned Fish Stew:
2. Cook the : Bacon: In an 8 to 10-quart Dutch oven or heavy pot (a 10-quart is recommended for space), cook the thick-cut bacon over medium heat for about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until it's wonderfully crisp. Turn off the heat, remove the crispy bacon with a slotted spoon, and place it on a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Set the bacon aside for later, but leave the rendered bacon fat in the pot. This fat is key for flavor!
3. Layer the : Ingredients (No Stirring!): Carefully add the potatoes, then the onions, and finally the fish fillets in distinct layers directly over the bacon fat in the pot. Do not stir these layers.
4. Add : Tomato Base: Pour the condensed tomato soup evenly over the layers. Then, dollop the tomato paste over the soup layer.
5. Season the : Stew: Sprinkle the salt, black pepper, Old Bay Seasoning, and a pinch of red pepper flakes evenly over the top of the layers.
6. Add : Water (No Stirring!): Gently pour in just enough water to cover all the ingredients. This will be approximately 5 cups, but adjust as needed. Again, do not stir at this stage; maintaining the layers is important.
7. Bring to a : Boil: Place the pot over medium-high heat and bring the stew to a rolling boil.
8. Simmer and : Cook: Once boiling, reduce the heat to maintain a gentle boil or high simmer (this will likely be medium to medium-low heat). Cover the pot

with a lid and cook for 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork-tender but not mushy, and the fish is fully cooked through and flakes easily.

9. Add the : Eggs: While the stew is still at a gentle boil/simmer, carefully break each of the 6 large eggs one at a time directly into the stew, placing them in a single layer on top. Discard the shells. Cook for about 5 minutes, or until the eggs are fully cooked to your preference (the yolks will set). Note that the eggs will naturally break up into chunks as they cook in the stew.
10. Final : Seasoning: Taste the stew and season with additional salt, pepper, Old Bay Seasoning, and/or red pepper, if desired.
11. Serve: Return the reserved crispy bacon to the stew or serve individual bowls topped with the bacon pieces. Serve hot and enjoy!

SWAPS & NOTES

Fish Choice: The key is to use a firm, white fish that won't fall apart easily during cooking.

Cod, snapper, grouper, or even halibut would be good alternatives if rockfish, red drum, or sheepshead aren't available.

Bacon: Thick-cut bacon renders more fat, which is essential for building the flavor base of this stew.

You can use less if you prefer, but don't omit it entirely.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The "No Stir" Rule: This is the most crucial tip!

Resisting the urge to stir helps keep the fish from breaking up and ensures the layers cook evenly, allowing the flavors to meld beautifully.

Dutch Oven Size: Using an 8 to 10-quart Dutch oven or heavy pot is recommended to ensure there's enough space for all the ingredients without overcrowding, especially if you're making the full recipe.

Quality Fish: Starting with good quality, fresh, firm white fish makes a huge difference in the final taste and texture of the stew.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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