



Panko Encrusted Mangrove Snapper

Florida Seafood at Your Fingertips **LIVE!**

Difficulty: Easy

Total time: 15-30 minutes preparation, 5-10 minutes frying time

Serves: 2-4

Ingredients:

Panko Fried Fish:

1½ pounds mangrove snapper fillets (*most white flesh seafood could be used as a substitute*)

1 box panko breadcrumbs

2 cups flour

1 cup milk

2 Eggs

2-3 cups canola or vegetable oil (*volume varies on the size of your frying apparatus/method, this amount will be more than enough for a medium sized frying pan with oil to top off*)

A pinch of salt or a salty type seasoning to taste!

Apricot Pineapple Sauce:

1½ cups canned pineapple chunks

1½ cups canned apricot halves

⅓ cup apricot preserves

Instructions:

Panko Fried Mangrove Snapper:

1. Portion, wash and dry your mangrove snapper fillets. The fillet may be prepared into cutlet sized chunks or nuggets depending on party's preference. If the fillet is thick, you may be able to flatten the meat slightly with pressure from your hand while applying breading to ensure for a thoroughly cooked crispy bite!
2. Pour 1-2 cups of flour into a mixing bowl or container.
3. Crack 2 eggs into another mixing bowl and add ~1 cup of milk. Mix the milk and eggs with a fork until the mixture is uniform.
4. Pour 1/3rd – ½ box of panko breadcrumbs into another mixing bowl or container. Containers with a flat bottom are ideal to prevent tipping when breading.
5. Toss a few pieces of the snapper into the flour, make sure to thoroughly coat each piece until no portion of the flesh is exposed.
6. Remove the flour coated fish pieces from the bowl and place into the egg milk mixture. Move the fish chunks around with the fork you used to create the mixture until all parts of the fillet have been exposed to egg/milk mix.
7. Lift the fish fillets from the egg/milk mix with the fork and let drip before placing them into the panko breadcrumb container. Fillets may be lightly tossed or you additional breading may be poured on top before pressing the breadcrumbs into the fillet.

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8. Prepare/preheat your oiled pan or deep fryer for the breaded fillets. If you're using a pan, fill the container with oil to a height that is slightly less than half the thickness of the fillet. When adding the fish to the oil, the fillets will displace the oil causing the level to slightly rise depending on the size of your pan. A good temperature to fry fish may be anywhere from 5-7 on a typical stove top. Allow your oil to heat up before placing the fillet to be fried, if your pan has been heating for a while or a new to the art of frying, test the oil with one piece of fish before adding additional fillets. Oil that is ready to be used for frying will start to crackle when fish is added. Fry fish until a golden-brown color, if one side is becoming "done" too fast, you may lower the temperature and/or flip the fillets periodically. It may take 5-10 minutes to fry your fillets depending on the thickness of the fish as well as the temperature of your oil.
9. Remove fried fish and place them on a plate with a layer of paper towels to absorb excess oil until ready to be plated or eaten! Salt or season to taste!


Apricot Pineapple Sauce:

1. Prepare a food processor or blender. The sauce can be created using an electric hand mixer if need be, if that is case, I recommend using crushed pineapple bits over rings or chunks for ease of blending.
2. Add ½ cup of drained canned pineapple bits, ½ cup of drained canned apricot halves and 1/3rd cup of apricot preserves to your food processor container to be blended.
3. Pulse blend the mixture until desired consistency is reached. I prefer a ketchup like consistency rather than a puree.
4. Pour some of the mixture over the top of fried fish right before eating or use as a dipping sauce. *Enjoy!*

Florida Seafood at your Fingertips Species Profile:

Mangrove snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*) are fish with many names and are often referred to as gray snapper, mangos, or even black snapper. This common fish of fish of Florida can be found from Massachusetts to Brazil and are frequently encountered both inshore and offshore along our coast. Juvenile mangrove snapper begin their lives nearshore and can be found around structures such as mangroves and bridge pilings while larger individuals inhabit reefs, wrecks, ledges, rock piles in depths up to 585ft! These fish exhibit a daytime schooling behavior and feed at night; thus, night fishing trips are a popular way to target these and other snapper species. Mangrove snapper eat a wide range of fish, crustaceans and other invertebrates. This species of snapper is euryhaline and able to tolerate a large range of salinities. Both juveniles and adults can be found in rivers, lakes, ponds and springs located near saltwater. Mangrove snapper become sexually mature at around 2 years old which is roughly 7-13 inches in total length. This species is believed to live up to 25 years in age.

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Mangrove snapper spawn multiple times during the season which occurs between April to November with summer being the peak spawning time. These snapper spawn around the full moon and broadcast demersal eggs that hatch approximately 20 hours after being fertilized. Once larval mangrove snapper settle, they inhabit estuarine habitats and begin to migrate offshore with age. The Florida state record for mangrove snapper is 17 pounds which was caught out of Port Canaveral while the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) world record for this species is 18 pounds 10 ounces caught out of Louisiana!

Where to buy:

This fish is readily available at both fish houses and supermarkets as a filleted or whole product.

How to catch:

Mangrove snapper in Florida can be caught right from the dock to more than 100 miles offshore! My favorite method for targeting this species is freelining (using just a leader and a hook) a scaled sardine or shrimp underneath dock pilings or mangrove prop roots. When fishing inshore, a 1/0 – 2/0 sized hook on a 3-4 ft 20 lb fluorocarbon leader is plenty. This freeline method can be used offshore as well but often when there is a good chum slick going causing the snapper feed closer to the surface or in the water column. Free spooling is a great way to target snapper especially when using chum. Use anywhere from a 1/8 – 1/2 oz jig head (depending on current) tipped with bait. Let your jig head naturally drift back in the chum slick with your bail open until you feel a bite. If your bait drifts more than ~100 yards from the boat without a bite, reel in and restart the drift. Using a fish finder or knocker rig is also a popular method when fishing over structure. For offshore bottom snapper fishing I would use a 1 – 4 oz weight (dependent on depth and current), 2/0 – 4/0 circle hook and a 30-40 lb leader. Hold on because this species hits like a ton of bricks and when the bite is on, most rods on the boat are bent! For the most up to date snapper regulations please check out this page. <https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/snappers/>

Sustainability:

When considering sustainability for the species and the environment, mangrove snapper caught in the United States are listed as best and good alternatives by the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch. Read more here: <https://www.seafoodwatch.org/-/m/e9d22e2819f0455993a9945d70ce102e.pdf>

Seafood Cost:

Inexpensive to moderate depending on which species you chose to use for the recipe! Most species of frozen white fish would taste great prepared in this fashion.

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