

Florida Seafood at Your Fingertips: Live!

Presented by Dorothy C. Lee, CFCS, dclee@ufl.edu
& Rick O'Connor, roc1@ufl.edu
[Link to recording](#)

Southwest Fish Tacos

What you will need:

- 1-pound firm white fish (flounder, grouper, mahi-mahi)
- 1/2 cup light ranch-style dressing
- 2 Tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 jalapeño pepper (seeded, chopped)
- 4 cups, coleslaw mix or broccoli slaw
- 10 6-inch corn or flour tortillas
- 3 Tablespoons canola oil
- 2 Tablespoons cornmeal
- 1 tomato

Difficulty of recipe: Simple, super-fast, super easy

Total time to make: Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Recipe instructions:

- Cut fish into strips; refrigerate. Stir together the dressing, lime juice, chili powder, pepper, and jalapeno pepper. Combine with coleslaw mix and stir well.
- Cover and place in refrigerator until serving time.
- Warm tortillas according to package directions.
- Heat oil in non-stick skillet over medium heat.
- Dredge fish strips in cornmeal, coating all sides.
- Shallow fry fish in hot oil until cornmeal is lightly browned. 1 to 2 minutes per side.
- Drain fish strips on paper towels.
- Top each tortilla with fish strips and coleslaw mix.
- Fold tortilla in half and serve with chopped tomato and fresh chopped cilantro.

Florida Seafood at your Fingertips Species Profile:

Florida fish are a good source of protein, low in saturated fats, and high in Vitamin B6 and B12; and lionfish are no different. There is a concern about lionfish being poisonous and dangerous to eat. They are actually venomous, and the toxin is located in the dorsal, pelvic and anal spines. The meat is safe to eat.

Where to buy:

Lionfish are not easy to purchase, but not impossible. Many communities do have commercial harvesters who are selling to approved wholesalers. These fish are then shipped to markets and restaurants around the country. A couple of the major grocery chains in our state will offer them. If they are not at the counter, ask and see if they can order some. NOTE: it is usually one of the higher priced fish.

How to catch:

Catching lionfish on hook and line is VERY rare but does happen. Those who have caught them were not fishing for them, but rather for other bottom fish. So, their bait is usually cut or live bait on bottom rigs.

Spearing them is legal in Florida as long as you are spear fishing in a location that allows spear fishing. If you are specifically targeting lionfish, you can do so without a state fishing license, but you should have one if you are harvesting any other species. There is no season or bag limit for this fish.

Sustainability: This species is considered an invasive species and their overharvest is encouraged. All product sold in grocery stores and restaurants is wild harvest using spear so by-catch is a non-issue.

Seafood cost: This is one of the higher priced fish in local markets and restaurants. Prices can run between \$20-\$30/lb.

Final Talking Point(s): The nice thing about consuming lionfish, other than it taste good, is that you are assisting the community with the management of an invasive species. Lionfish are aggressive consumers, consuming at least 70 known species of small demersal reef fish (including commercially valuable species like vermillion snapper). The decline of reef fish is 2.5x greater when lionfish are present as when native predators are in place. They have a high reproductive rate, producing an average of 30,000 fertilized eggs every four days, and can cause a lot of damage to both the ecology of local reefs, and the fishing-diving based economy.

Florida Sea Grant plug: