

Preparing Your Catch Like A Professional

Preparing CALAMARI

Years ago, I can well remember that all the old squid was good for was snapper bait. I guess we can probably thank the arrival of our Southern European immigrants for pointing out just what a delicacy we were missing. Today squid is much sought after as table fare and one of the best to eat is the Southern Calamari. Here are the steps of preparing calamari for the table.



1 While the tentacles and the flaps of the southern calimari are quite edible, most people associate calamari with the now well known rings made from the dorsal mantle or tube as it is more commonly known.



2 Start by gripping the mantle in one hand and gripping the top of the head with the other (use your fingers to grip just inside of the mantle), then simply pull the two apart.

Introducing an interesting new mini-series on how to prepare - **scale, fillet, skin, debone or slice** - your catch in order to achieve the highest yield, the best flavour, and by definition, the most **value**. Words and pics by John and Sam Yates, working in Adelaide with SAMTASS Seafoods.



3 Next feel just inside the mantle for the base of the transparent plastic like 'backbone' commonly known as the 'feather' because of its obvious shape.



4 Gripping the base of the feather between thumb and forefinger, pull the feather from the mantle and discard.



5 Now separate the flaps from the tube by running your fingertips along their junction and then pulling them apart. In this photo the ink sac has ruptured; wash the ink away.

Have you ever stood in front of a fishmonger's display stand and wondered to yourself, "Just how do they get such neat fillets?" I know I have, and to find out, I thought I'd ask the experts, the good folk who do this sort of thing for a living, themselves. Consequently while in Adelaide recently, I trundled on down to Samtass Seafoods at Richmond, where I was fortunate to have Mark Andonas and his team show me the ropes.

Now these blokes were pure professionals and although they were quick, their techniques ensured little went to waste. And I do mean quick. So much so that initially I had to persuade them to slow down just so I could see what they were doing. Lesson one; Never play poker with one who fillets fish for a living! Seriously though, making the most of our dwindling fish stocks is something we all need to bear in mind and it was for this reason the

Samtass Crew were more than happy to pass their skills on. As a result in this and forthcoming issues of F&B, the best methods of preparing some of our more common species of fish as well as a few other sea borne delicacies will be displayed. Some techniques take a bit of practice but there will be plenty of tips along the way to help. So sharpen your knives - but first you had better go and catch yourself a few fish!



6 While holding the mantle by the tip use your other hand to squeeze the entrails out of the tube.



7 Wash the mantle again and then 'skin' it. The membrane is simply peeled away from the tube revealing the white flesh beneath. Skinning the tube at this time and not beforehand, helps save the tube from becoming stained should the ink sac rupture.



8 You are now left with the basic tube.



9 Trim the leading edge from the tube as it is tough.



10 The familiar rings are then made by cutting across the remaining tube.



11 Now don't go throwing everything else away as what is left still makes mighty fine snapper bait.