

***LUCY  
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***A HANDBOOK  
OF FISH  
COOKERY: HOW  
TO BUY, DRESS,  
COOK, AND EAT  
FISH***

**Lucy H. Yates**

# **A Handbook of Fish Cookery: How to buy, dress, cook, and eat fish**

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# INTRODUCTION.

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In spite of a considerable amount of trade grumbling, the best part of the market is still held by English fish, as a glance at any time over the names on the crates will show. The foreign importations, though large, are not nearly so extensive as might be supposed.

As a rule the north British ports furnish the largest supply; the southern ports suffer the most from foreign competition. Continental freightage also is light, and as the foreigner rarely keeps very closely to the laws of "fence months," he gets fish into the market when no home-caught of the same kind is to be had.

If all people, both rich and poor, could be persuaded to eat fish more freely, they would be benefited both in health and pocket.

If the *demand* were greater the *supply* would be more liberal, more varied, and also much cheaper.

At present, although there is much complaining about catches falling off, many grounds yielding but a poor harvest, yet tons of fish are annually sent away from the markets for manure.

The trade is both risky and variable, consequently prices have to be kept up that the dealer may realise some profit, and for this state of things *the modern housewife is largely accountable*.

It is not wholly a question of price, although there is still much to desire on this point.

Ignorance, especially with the working-man's wife, will generally be found to be the cause of the aversion which many housewives have to the cooking of fish; even in middle and upper class households much ignorance as to the kinds of fish and the best means of making use of them prevails.

The poorer classes still regard fish as "nothing to make a meal of," and, sad to say, a great many of the poor of our cities will not eat fish, however cheaply they may get it. They have many advantages of getting it which those who live in superior neighbourhoods have not.

Often before the Central Market closes, first-rate cod is to be had for twopence the pound—a seven-pound cod for a shilling. Plentiful and wholesome as cod is, it is seldom much thought of by poor people. Salted, sun-dried cod, is thought beneath notice, although large quantities are consumed on the continent, and some very dainty dishes made therefrom. Plaice, too, generally to be had at fourpence the pound, is but lightly esteemed.

Humble Londoners care most for smoked fish, "something that has a grip with it," they say. To meet this demand many adulterations are practised by the cockney curer. "Haddocks" are often but indifferent codling. The "Finnan Haddie" was caught in the Scheldt, and Stavanger herrings are passed off as Yarmouth bloaters.

Unwholesome common lobsters, winkles, and whelks, are preferred to good substantial fish, and, as before stated, ignorance of the proper methods of cooking is most frequently the reason of this.