Great Lakes lake whitefish is the primary catch for Michigan commercial and tribal-licensed anglers. A native fish abundant in the Great Lakes, lake whitefish is known for its flaky texture. It can be grilled, baked, broiled, pan fried, deep fried, poached, steamed, roasted and even pickled. Check out Michigan Sea Grant’s collection of Great Lakes lake whitefish recipes in *Wild Caught and Close to Home*, a cookbook available online for purchase at [www.miseagrant.com](http://www.miseagrant.com).

Lake whitefish aren't really white. The skin is greenish brown on the back with silver sides and a silvery-white belly.

Many consumers are concerned about contaminants when it comes to eating fish from the Great Lakes. However, Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron all have lower levels of mercury than inland lakes and reservoirs. In fact, lake whitefish as a species has low levels of mercury buildup and passes all U.S. Food and Drug Administration standards concerning levels of contaminants.

One 3-ounce serving of lake whitefish features more omega-3 fatty acids than the same amount of pink or sockeye salmon. This serving size is a good source of niacin plus vitamins B-6 and B-12 as well as an excellent source of phosphorus and selenium and a good source of potassium (Great Lakes Whitefish, 2013).

Lake whitefish bought in a farmers market should be stored at 38 °F or colder. Bring a cooler full of ice to the farmers market if you plan to purchase lake whitefish. Consume within three days of purchase.

### Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size</th>
<th>1 fillet (85g)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servings Per Container</td>
<td>Varies, usually 4</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>150</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Fat</td>
<td>1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sodium</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potassium</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugars</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protein</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iron</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Daily Value*</th>
<th>Niacin</th>
<th>15%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamin B6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vitamin B12</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selenium</td>
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*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories per gram</th>
<th>Fat</th>
<th>9 -</th>
<th>Carbohydrate</th>
<th>4 -</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
</table>

(Great Lakes Whitefish, 2013)
Great Lakes Lake Whitefish

Fresh or Frozen?
Michigan Sea Grant tests with consumer panels at Michigan State University’s Food Sensory Laboratory concluded that when consumers ate cooked Great Lakes lake whitefish, they could not differentiate a flavor difference between fish prepared from fresh or from vacuum-packed frozen fish.

Some Great Lakes lake whitefish are caught in Canadian waters so if you want Michigan-caught lake whitefish, it is best to ask for it.

Whitefish Taco Salad
Lake whitefish fillets (each fillet serves 2 people)  
Cumin  
Yellow corn chips  
Refried beans and/or rice (cooked)  
Lettuce  
Tomato  
Cilantro (chopped)  
Salsa  
Hot sauce  
Ranch dressing  

Preheat oven to 375 °F. Cover baking sheet with aluminum foil and place fillets on foil. Lightly sprinkle the fillets with cumin and bake for 12 minutes or until fillets easily flake.

While fillets bake, spread corn chips on plate. Next, over the chips, layer beans or rice or both, lettuce and tomatoes. Place fillets as the next layer. Sprinkle cilantro on the salad. Serve with salsa, hot sauce and dressing on the side.


Lake Michigan Chowder (Gluten Free)

Servings: 6  
5 to 6 slices applewood smoked bacon, chopped  
1 small onion, minced  
3 stalks celery, chopped  
2 potatoes, cubed  
1 cup fish or chicken broth  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon thyme  
1 teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons sweet rice flour (equal amounts of cornstarch can also be used)  
2 to 3 cups whole milk  
1 pound Great Lakes lake whitefish fillets, skinned  
Hot sauce to taste  

In a large Dutch oven or your favorite soup pot, cook the bacon until done. Remove the bacon to cool, leaving bacon grease in bottom of pan.

Sauté onions and celery in pan until soft.  
Add potatoes, broth, salt, thyme and pepper. Cover and cook for roughly 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.  

Stir rice flour into ½ cup of milk until smooth. Add to 1 ½ cups milk and whisk until smooth. Rice flour easily clumps, so you may need to add small amounts of flour to the milk at a time.  

Add the flour and milk mixture to soup pot and stir. Add remaining milk until desired consistency is reached.  

Lay skinned fillets on top of the chowder, cover and let simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until fillets easily break apart. Once fish is cooked, stir until fish is evenly distributed throughout the soup.  

Serve warm with a dash of hot sauce.


Find out more about Michigan Fresh at msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh.
Great Lakes Lake Whitefish

**Fresh Herb Whitefish and Potato Bake**

Servings: 2
Olive oil spray
1 side of lake whitefish (about ½ pound)
1 to 2 teaspoons each of fresh parsley, rosemary and chives
1 to 2 medium potatoes
Garlic to taste, fresh or dried

Place fish skin-side down on non-stick baking pan or regular baking sheet sprayed with olive oil.
Crush parsley, rosemary and chives together and sprinkle on fish. Leave uncovered.
Microwave potatoes until just done, slice and place on baking pan next to fish.
Spray layer of olive oil on potatoes and sprinkle with garlic.

Bake at 450 °F for 10 minutes. Fish is done when thickest part of the fillet closest to the skin has turned from clear translucent to solid white. Remove immediately if done or check every 2 minutes.

Recipe adapted from
The Fishmonger’s Wife, Muskegon, Michigan.
Retrieved from [www.thefishmongerswife.net](http://www.thefishmongerswife.net)

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**References:**

The Fish Monger’s Wife: [www.thefishmongerswife.net](http://www.thefishmongerswife.net)


Michigan Sea Grant: [www.miseagrant.com](http://www.miseagrant.com)

Thank you, Ron Kinnunen of Michigan Sea Grant and Amber Mae Peterson, aka The Fish Monger’s Wife, from Muskegon, Michigan, for reviewing and providing information for this fact sheet.