

## Crab Stuffed Flounder

February 18 is celebrated as National Crab Stuffed Flounder Day. The unique, flavorful combination of flounder and crab is composed of a stuffing made with crab meat. The filling can be stuffed into a whole flounder or, if you only have fillets, the stuffing can be rolled up inside the fillets and baked. Often times, it is difficult to keep stuffing inside a rolled fish fillet, so baking the stuffing on top of the fish is also a delicious and practical option. Topping fish filets with crab or other stuffings is simple and delicious.

Flounder is a delicate flatfish with a sweet, mild flavor. Flounder has many different species. In the waters of the United States, winter flounder and Pacific flounder are the most common species. In the United States, some of the more popular and delicious crabs include rock, blue, stone, Dungeness, and king crabs. These types of crabs are found in both hard and soft shells and can be found along all the coasts and Hawaii.

When buying crab, it is important to know the four grades of meat. The most expensive, jumbo lump crab meat, has the largest, white pieces of crab meat. Next, the lump/backfin crab meat has a similar color, texture, and taste to the jumbo lump meat, but comes in smaller pieces, making it a step less expensive. The third grade is white crab meat, which comes in small, white pieces best for use in recipes such as crab cakes. The final grade, which is least expensive, is the meat from the crab claw. This reddish-brown meat has the most flavor and works well in spicy dishes.

Like all foods, fresh crab is best, but canned is also an option a person might want to choose if they are on a budget. Pasteurized crab is found in the refrigerated section in the seafood department at most grocery stores. Pasteurized crab meat has an expiration date on the container. Be sure to look for the “use by” date on the container before buying the crab meat. Pasteurized crab meat is highly perishable and once opened, should be consumed within two days. After opening the canned crab meat, be sure to carefully go through the meat and remove any cartilage or tiny bits of shell you might find.

Turn a simple flounder fillet into something special with a crab cake-like topping. A mixture of crabmeat, crushed crackers or bread crumbs, mayonnaise, and seafood seasonings like Old Bay and Worcestershire make for a flavorful stuffing, the perfect complement to flounder’s mild taste. Although elegant enough for guests, this fish entree is also simple enough for a family meal.

If flounder is not available, substitute it with haddock, halibut, sole, tilapia, or other delicate, flaky texture white fish. After buying fresh fish, it can be stored in the refrigerator for one or two days before it should be cooked. If you will not be using the fish promptly, it is safe to freeze the fish for three to eight months at 0°F.

When baking flounder or other white fish, it is essential to cook the fish until it reaches an internal temperature of at least 145°F. Do not overcook the fish, or it will be dry. If there is leftover fish from your meal, refrigerate the leftovers right away and eat them within four days. If the meal leftovers sit at room temperature for over two hours, they need to be thrown away immediately.

When stuffed with rich, delicious crabmeat, fish becomes an elegant feast. The recipe is easy to prepare and gives the appearance of an extravagant preparation.

### **Crab Stuffed Flounder w/ Garlic Cream Sauce**

#### Ingredients:

4 Flounder fillets, thinly sliced

Salt and pepper, to taste

#### Crab Filling:

2 cups cooked crab meat

½ cup yellow onion, finely diced

2 small sweet bell peppers, finely diced

1/3 cup dry bread crumbs or cracker crumbs

2 Tablespoons garlic, minced

1 Tablespoon seasoned pepper

1 Tablespoon chili powder

1 teaspoon paprika

1 Tablespoon olive oil

Salt to taste

Optional: Cayenne pepper

1 egg

#### Garlic Cream Sauce:

2 Tablespoons garlic, minced

2 cups heavy whipping cream

½ cup chicken or vegetable broth

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

2 Tablespoons garlic salt

#### Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Combine all ingredients for the crab filling, except for the egg, and stir well to combine.

Add the egg and fully incorporated it into the mixture.

Season the flounder on both sides, as desired.

Stuff approximately 1/4 - 1/3 cup of crab filling into the center of the flounder filet.

Roll flounder with the crab mixture in it.

Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes until fish reaches an internal temperature of at least 145°F.

Turn on oven broiler, and broil for 4–5 minutes on high or until browned.

For the Garlic Cream Sauce:

Saute the garlic in 1 Tablespoon of olive oil in a hot pan.

Add the whipping cream and broth. Combine well.

Add 3 – 5 Tbsp flour, depending on how thick you want your sauce.

Continuously whisk until sauce begins to thicken, about 10 – 15 minutes. Set aside.

Remove the flounder from the oven.

Cover with garlic cream sauce and enjoy!

(Sources: [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov); [www.gigarecipes.com](http://www.gigarecipes.com); [www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com); [ww.thenibble.com](http://ww.thenibble.com))