

How to clean / fillet Kamikaze Carp, aka Asian (Silver) Carp

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Remove the fillets from the body of the carp (1) as you would any other fish. Cut around the ribs, leaving them attached to the skeleton.

Lay the fillets skin side down on a cutting board and cut them in half lengthwise, cutting through the skin (2). Remove any fatty belly meat from the fillet. It has a strong flavor.



Skin the fillet halves by laying them skin side down on the cutting board and slicing the meat from the skin, starting at the tail section (3). An electric knife works especially well for this, but any sharp knife will do.



Remove and discard the dark red meat from the fillet halves (4). You now have delicious white meat, but there are still Y-shaped intramuscular bones hiding inside.

Cut the rib cage section off. It is now boneless so you can use it without further preparation.

The Y-bones (5) lie lengthwise at an angle through the fillets. Slip the fillet knife in between the bones and cut strips that contain two or three bones, taking care to not cut any bones. It won't take long to understand exactly where the bones lie.

Now roll these fillets in cornmeal or your favorite breading and fry them as you would any fish. At the table, break the strip in half. The bones will stay in one half. You can eat the boneless half of the strip, then grab the Y-bones and pull them from the other half and eat it, too. It's a lot like eating hot wings, but not as messy.



Deboning

If your family insists on fish with no bones at all, with a little more work you can remove all the bones from a fillet. The shape of the meat that results is different from what most people are familiar with, but the taste is excellent. You should start with a fish of at least 8 pounds, at least until you are familiar with the technique.

Start with the top half of a fillet. Lay the fillet on your cutting board so that the outside of the fish is up. With your fingers, feel for a hard portion on the first inch of the fillet. There are a couple of unusual pine cone-shaped bones in the first inch or so of the top half of the fillet. These make bone removal from that section impossible.

Starting behind this hard section, holding your knife parallel to the cutting board, cut a long strip of meat from the top of the fillet, exposing the Y-bones (6). This will result in a boneless piece of meat about as thick as a crappie filet, but about two inches wide and very long.



Using shallow cuts, free the meat from above and below the exposed Y-bones (7).



Turn the fillet over. You will see a row of white dots that indicate where the point of the Y-branch of the bone nears the cut surface of the fillet. Make a cut parallel to and right above the row of dots (8). Cut down until the knife contacts the main shaft of the Y-bone. Cut and scrape sideways with the knife to remove a long, rope-like piece of boneless meat.



Repeat step 3, making your cut just below the row of dots (9) and removing the remainder of the usable meat from the top half of the fillet.



Now de-bone the bottom half of a fillet (10). You have already de-boned the meat from the rib cage section when you left the ribs attached to the skeleton. Cut the ribcage section off and put it with your boneless meat. Now repeat steps 3 and 4 with the remaining portion of the bottom fillet. The bones lie very near the surface of the meat on the bottom half of the fillet, so there is no need to repeat steps 1 and 2.



Repeat above with the other side of the fish. Once you become proficient, it takes about 20 minutes to completely de-bone an Asian carp. That may seem like a lot of work, but if you can generate 3 pounds of bluegill fillets in a similar time, you are faster with a fillet knife than Zorro is with his sword.

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