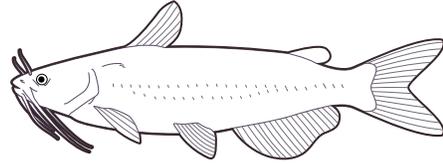


# Channel Catfish

*Ictalurus punctatus*

Channel catfish, commonly known as catfish, is a freshwater finfish in the Ictaluridae family. Their native range extends from southern Canada and the Central US to Mexico.<sup>1,2</sup> They are popular to catch and eat and have been introduced throughout the US and the world for food and recreation. In their natural environment, catfish can be found in large creeks and rivers with slow to moderate currents and in ponds, lakes, and reservoirs. They have long slender bodies. Their upper bodies are bluish-gray, sides are light blue to silver, and bellies are white. Their heads are flat to slightly rounded with whisker-like barbels on their snouts and deeply forked tails.



## Where do catfish products come from?

Catfish are farmed worldwide. Most catfish and hybrid catfish farmed in the US are raised in the Southern region.<sup>3</sup> Catfish sold in restaurants and grocery stores may not be catfish. US labeling laws state that only species in the family Ictaluridae be sold as catfish, which includes, but is not limited to, channel and hybrid catfish. Scientists have found a small percentage of fish sold as catfish were not in the family Ictaluridae, but Pangasiidae,<sup>4</sup> a family that includes “catfish-like” fishes typically sold as pangasius, basa, or swai. These species are not catfish. To learn more about country of origin or species, ask your server or fishmonger. Channel catfish are also farm-raised in the Midwest for stocking, fee-fishing, and food.

## Why eat catfish?

- Lean Protein
- Vitamins & Minerals (nutrient dense)
- Omega 3 Fatty Acids
- Low in Calories

## Are U.S. catfish products safe to eat?

Most catfish are raised in earthen ponds eating a mix of natural food and specially formulated catfish diets. Farmers manage water quality and feed to ensure that catfish are delicious and safe to eat. Processors also have strict controls to protect taste. Scientists found channel catfish tested well below the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA’s) recommended safety limits for methylmercury.<sup>5,6</sup> When fishing in public waterways, it is recommended to check with a local fish advisory before eating your catch.

## To learn about commercial fish and seafood safety, visit:

Eat Midwest Fish: Advisories

[eatmidwestfish.org/nutrition-safety/advisories](http://eatmidwestfish.org/nutrition-safety/advisories)

EPA Fish and Shellfish Advisories and Safe Eating Guide

<https://bit.ly/epa-safe-eating-guide>

EPA Agency State, Territory and Tribe Fish Advisory Contacts

<https://fishadvisoryonline.epa.gov/Contacts.aspx>

# Classic Fried Catfish

Prep Time: 10 minutes / Start to finish: 25–30 minutes

## Serves: 4

4 catfish fillets  
¾ cup yellow cornmeal  
¼ cup flour  
2 tsp salt  
1 tsp cayenne pepper  
¼ tsp garlic powder  
vegetable or peanut oil  
1 sliced tomato  
parsley sprigs

1. Combine cornmeal, flour, salt, cayenne pepper, and garlic powder.
2. Coat fillets with mixture, shaking off excess.
3. Heat 1 inch of oil to 350° F in a skillet.
4. Fry fillets in single layer until golden brown (5–6 min).
5. Remove from oil and pat dry.
6. Garnish with tomato and parsley. Serve.

## Cooking Tips

Catfish has dense, meaty fillets that do not fall apart when cooking. One of the most popular ways to prepare catfish is fried. Healthy ways to cook it include; air frying, baking, and grilling. Catfish pairs nicely with bold flavors like blackening spices, ginger, garlic, scallions, and citrus. Herbs that pair well with catfish are tarragon, thyme, and parsley.