



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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Fighting men in U. S. Training camps are now eating about four times as much fresh fish as the average civilian and these new eating habits may result in a marked increase in the per capita consumption of fish after the war, Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes said today.

With fish served, on an average, once a week to the approximately 5,000,000 men now in training in this country, the weekly military consumption of fresh and frozen fish amounts to some 1,750,000 pounds, dressed weight, according to figures supplied the Coordinator by the Office of the Quartermaster General.

In terms of annual per capita consumption, this means that soldiers, sailors, marines, and coastguardsmen are eating about 18 pounds of fresh and frozen fish a year, as compared with the general U. S. civilian average of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. These figures do not include canned or cured fish. Most canned fish bought by the Quartermaster Corps is reserved for overseas shipment, and little or no salt or smoked fish is used by the military services.

In comparing military and civilian consumption of fresh fish, Coordinator Ickes pointed out that the per capita consumption by civilians varies widely, ranging from as much as 30 pounds in some seacoast towns to a negligible figure in certain sections of the interior. Military trainees from some of the latter areas had never eaten fresh fish in civilian life, and as a result of their introduction to a variety of fish in the camps, we may become more of a fish-eating nation in post-war years, he said.

Through its purchases, the Quartermaster Corps is aiding the program of the Coordinator of Fisheries which calls for the utilization of as many species of fish as possible. At the beginning of the war only 8 or 9 species of fish were bought for military consumption; now at least 36 kinds of fish are on the Quartermaster General's shopping list of perishable foodstuffs. Army purchasing officers generally buy staple varieties which are available locally in greatest quantity. Luxury items like clams and scallops are rarely bought, lobsters never.

Fish procurement offices of the Quartermaster Corps are located at Boston, New York, Baltimore, Norfolk, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Chicago. Besides supplying other local varieties, Baltimore and Norfolk are

headquarters for oysters, New Orleans for shrimp, Seattle for halibut, salmon, and sole, and Chicago for lake trout, lake herring, and other freshwater fishes. The Office of the Quartermaster General in Chicago serves as national headquarters for the purchase of all fresh fish.

While Army procurement officers recognize no favorite variety of fish, the men are said to prefer halibut, probably because it is marketed so widely throughout the country that many were familiar with it in civilian life. Also, men who have been unaccustomed to eating fish generally prefer the white-meat kinds.

Oysters are shipped to military camps at the rate of about 40,000 gallons a week during their season. Oysters are often served as a Sunday evening supper dish, supplementing the regular Friday serving of fish.

Frozen fish-ideal for military needs - is the hardest to get this year, with the supply in the nation's freezers during the first six months of 1943 sometimes running as low as 38 percent of the holdings during comparable periods of 1942.

While pan-sized fish are often used, fillets are usually favored because of the ease of handling. Army and Navy cooks are little inclined to try innovations in fish cookery, sticking for the most part to the standard methods of frying and baking. Fillets are sometimes piled together and baked like a whole fish, to prevent drying and loss of flavor. Sauces are often used on both baked and fried fish.

A sample Friday fish dinner might include barley soup, fried fish with tartar sauce, creamed potatoes, corn, cabbage and pineapple salad, bread and butter, marble cake, and coffee. A supper featuring fish might consist of corn chowder, followed by baked fish with egg sauce, black-eyed peas, Waldorf salad, bread and butter, coffee, and doughnuts.

The present extensive use of fresh fish in military camps is in marked contrast to the first World War, when fish was seldom served and was never called for on the regular menus. An important reason for the increased use of fish is its availability in convenient filleted form, a marketing development of the 1920's. Improved refrigeration and transportation have also made it possible to handle fresh fish and other perishables which were necessarily denied military camps during the previous war.

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