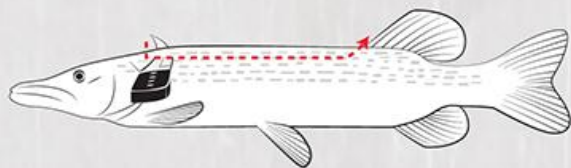


FILLET TECHNIQUE FOR PIKE

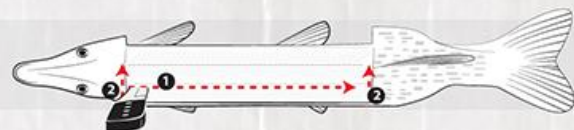
NORTHERN PIKE,
CHAIN PICKEREL



1 | Position the pike belly down on the cutting board. Hold the fish's head down against with your gloved off hand. With the center of the blade, cut down behind the skull to the backbone, but not through it. Turn the blade 90 degrees toward the tail of the pike, and following the backbone, cut back to the front of the rear fin. Turn the blade up and cut out the top creating boneless fillet #1.



2 | Turn the pike on its side with the cut you've just made facing you. You will see three sets of bones. With the curved portion of the blade follow along outside top set of bones carefully carving the back end of your first cut. Cut down to the bones behind the gill and ahead of the rear fin to remove this slab of flesh for fillet #2.



3 | Flip the pike over and repeat steps 1 and 2 on the other side to create fillet #3.



4 | With the pike still positioned on its side, cut straight down at the front of the adipose fin until you contact the backbone. Turn the knife 90 degrees, and cut back following the backbone through the tail for fillet #4.



5 | Turn pike over, and repeat step 4 on the other side for fillet #5.



Note: Skin all five fillets by laying a fillet skin side down on the cutting board. Hold the very back edge of the fillet with your off hand, and carefully slide the edge of the knife between the flesh and the skin. This is where the sharp, flexible blade of the knife is critical. Flexing the blade so it is flat with the skin and the cutting board, slide the knife toward the front of the fillet separating it from the skin.

EQUIPMENT

CUTTING BOARD - the bigger the better. Surface should be smooth to allow for easiest skinning and cleaning.

VACUUM SEALER - for any fillets you're not going to cook and eat immediately, vacuum sealing is by far the best way to preserve quality in the freezer for the longest time.

TRASH RECEPTACLE - for offal.

FILLET KNIFE - must have a flexible blade that will hold its edge. Grip of hard material such as wood, plastic, etc. is desirable as it provides the best feel. Some filleting techniques especially require "feel" which soft grips inhibit. Shorter blades are also more sensitive, but for filleting it's better to have a blade that's too long rather than too short; 8- to 10-inch blades are most common.

FILLETING GLOVE - the same kind of glove used in commercial meat processing prevents nicks and cuts to the off hand and enhances grip on slippery fish and fillets.

SOURCES:

PAUL POWIS, BASS PRO SHOPS, THUNDERMIST LURES