

Catch the fish and make a kelaguen dish

By Jesse Leon Guerrero

Pacific Navigator Staff

Got fresh fish and 10-15 minutes to spare? Grab several lemons and spices and that fish can become one of Guam's most popular local dishes.

John Leon Guerrero, a recreation assistant for Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), said the dish, known as fish kelaguen, is easy to make even for those without much cooking experience.

"This is what I grew up eating," said the Dededo resident. "We do it whenever we have fish."

Leon Guerrero said it's a good time to learn how to make this Chamorro meal because MWR patrons can catch marlin during the summertime.

"You can also find mahi mahi, tuna, and wahoo here," he said, while looking out at Apra Harbor July 10.

Local residents also make kelaguen with chicken or beef, but fish kelaguen has its own unique flavor, said Leon Guerrero. And although lemons are used to blend it all and marinade the fish, everything can be adjusted or substituted.

"Fresh lemons are better, but some people like lemon powder because it has a stronger taste," he said. "But I wouldn't use calamansi because it's sweet."

The one area people should be cautious with is the use of red peppers.

Leon Guerrero said peppers are needed for authentic kelaguen, but adding too much can keep some from really enjoying the meal.

"If you're not used to hot food, it might be too much," said Leon Guerrero. "So you have to put what you like."

Ingredients

- One pound of fresh fish
- Five whole lemons
- Teaspoon of salt
- Half cup of onions
- Five red peppers or tablespoon of red pepper chili sauce

Directions

Chop the onions.

Slice the fish into thin rectangular pieces and place in a bowl

Add the onions and sprinkle salt over the mix

Cut three lemons in half and squeeze juice evenly over the bowl

Add the peppers and use a spoon to mix it all

Try a slice of the fish and add more lemon juice or peppers as preferred

The kelaguen can be eaten immediately, but to thoroughly "cook" and marinate it in the lemon juice, let the bowl sit for three hours

For more information about fishing opportunities at U.S. Naval Base Guam, call MWR's Sumay Cove Marina at 564-1846 or visit www.mwrguam.com.

Deep sea fishing rental rates

\$20—1st hour, \$10 — after ea. hour

\$3.50 per gallon of used fuel. Rental for Fishing Charters \$275 — 4 hours \$325 — 6 hours

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Local Dish: John Leon Guerrero, a recreation assistant for Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation, presents a bowl of marlin kelaguen at the Sumay Cove Marina July 10. Guerrero prepared the popular local dish in less than 15 minutes, using marlin, green onions, lemons and red pepper sauce. (U.S. Navy Photo by Jesse Leon Guerrero)