

Red Snapper (Huachinango)

Equipment needed: Cast-iron skillet, wide fish spatula, kitchen shears, whisk, candy, or deep fry thermometer

□ Ingredients:

Whole Red Snapper – 3 to 4 pounds per fish

Frying oil – 2 cups Peanut Oil or any other oil with a high heat flash point

Brine:

Warm Water – 4 cups

Red Wine Vinegar – ¼ cup

Granulated Sugar – 2 Tablespoons

Kosher Salt – 2 Tablespoons

Fresh Ginger (sliced and unpeeled) – 2 ounces

Red Onion (sliced) – ½

Garlic Cloves (smashed) – 4 each

Fresh Thyme – 4 sprigs

Cinnamon stick – 1 each

Allspice (crushed) – 4 each

Habanero Pepper (halved) – 1 each

Orange peel – 1 each

Squeezed Orange juice from same orange

(hand squeeze and keep for brine)



[Red Snapper (Huachinango)] Method

1. Prep Snapper by first making sure to scale and remove guts. Using your kitchen shears, snip the gills out, dorsal fin, pectoral fins, and anal fins. Or at least cut off the dorsal fins that are very sharp and will get you.
2. Once finished prepping the Snapper, score three to four slices down each side of the fish. This will expose the interior flesh to absorb flavors from the brine and ensure even cooking.
3. For the brine, combine warm water, red wine vinegar, sugar and salt in a container and whisk until sugar and salt have dissolved and incorporated.
4. Next add the remainder of ingredients to the brine.
5. Now that your brine is ready, place your prepped whole Snapper in the brine and cover with lid. Allow the Snapper to sit in brine overnight.
6. Using a brine will help keep the flesh moist and help from drying during the cooking process and impart flavor to the fish.
7. When you are ready to fry your whole Red Snapper the following day, make sure to remove fish from brine and give it a quick rinse. Pat dry with paper towels and allow to come to room temperature before frying.
8. When you are ready, heat your cast-iron skillet and pour your 2 cups of Peanut Oil in. Bring the oil temperature up to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
9. Once temp is reached, gently slide your whole Snapper into the oil and watch it sizzle away for approximately 8 minutes.
10. For the other side, using your fish spatula gently flip fish over to commence frying. I like using a spoon or another utensil to catch the fish gently as it falls over. This will help from splashing oil everywhere. Finish frying for another 6 to 8 minutes until entire fish is cooked through and skin is nice and crispy.
11. Season fried fish with salt right out of the oil and rest on a rack. If you are not going to eat immediately, place in a 200-degree oven to keep warm and crisp.

I like using a vibrant chimichurri salsa or quick braised spicy pickled veggies to accompany the flaky meatiness of the Snapper. Buen Provecho (Bon Appetite) – Chef Juan Zamora – www.chulaseafood.com