



## The CRAYFISH TALE

### **FREEZING CRAYFISH**

Every now and then I get queries about how to freeze crayfish. I have touched on this topic before in some of my writings, but let's take a closer look at this interesting method of extending the crayfish season.

At first, freezing crayfish never was a problem for me. I never had enough crayfish to last more than a dinner or two with friends.

But then as I became more efficient in my crayfish catching, (and started using the trot line system) I often found that I had too many crayfish to dispose of in just one or two dinners. So I learned how to freeze them.

Unfortunately I could not refer back to my mother's days and do what she did. She never had a freezer. When we ate crayfish in the old days it was now or never. Usually some time in August when the old regulations allowed us to catch and eat crayfish.

But as time went by, the freezer entered the food preservation arena, and now people started saving their surplus by freezing it.

Fortunately I can now browse the Internet with the help of Google, and being well versed in both English and

Swedish, I can ask Google to send me crayfish answers in both languages.

One of the first I found said this, (in translation) 'Crayfish frozen dry keep for at least three months. Crayfish frozen in the brine lasts at least six months.' So freezing in the brine makes a lot more sense.

### **FREEZING THE CRAYS IN THE BRINE**

When I first Googled the internet for information about freezing crayfish, I became thoroughly confused. There were umpteen suggestions about how to do it. Some said you should freeze the crayfish live, and then thaw them out when you wanted to cook them and eat them. Others said you should pull the tails off the live crayfish and then cook them and later freeze them. Some suggested you cook the crays and stuff them into plastic bags that you pumped clear of any air. Then freeze them. Several recipes emphasized that you must make sure the cooked or frozen crayfish not be exposed to air, or they will not last long.

Finally I found the recipe that made a heck of a lot more sense. First cook crayfish in the water solution you prefer that gives them the best taste. (In my book that

means ½ cup of salt per gallon of water.) Then cool off the boil and leave the cooked crayfish in the refrigerator over-night. Then FREEZE THEM IN THE BRINE.

Freezing them in the brine solves the problem of keeping air away from the frozen critters. Simply find some plastic containers for the amount of crayfish you want to preserve. Plastic containers have the ability to slightly adjust their size to the change due to the freezing process. I often use milk containers where I have enlarged the top entry or I rob my wife of some of her plastic containers that can hold twenty or thirty crayfish in each.

Over the years of freezing crayfish I developed the habit of freezing 30 crays per container. That will give me 15 crayfish per sitting. So I eat crayfish two dinners in a row at least once, sometimes twice a month. Before I put a container in the freezer, I add a label indicating how many and the time and place where they were caught. Not that I have ever had any frozen crayfish left after a year has gone by, but I want to be sure to eat the oldest frozen first.

If I cooked crayfish the Cajun way with corn and potatoes and other goodies, I would probably separate the crayfish and freeze them alone.

So, when the spirit moves me, and it often does when it comes to eating crayfish, I grab a container from the freezer and put it in the refrigerator for a couple of days. Sometimes I leave it on the kitchen sink until all the ice has thawed out, after which it goes right into the fridge. Slow thawing is preferable to quickies. Don't thaw them out using running warm water! Another tip,

after the crayfish have thawed out, let the crayfish seep in the brine for a day or two, and they will taste better. Actually, 'just cooked or frozen crayfish' are not usually the best. Let them soak up the flavor of the brine for a while. Especially if you are cooking with spices such as cayenne pepper and dill.

There is a tendency for the salty taste of the brine to increase when freezing crayfish. A slight reduction of the salt amount may be proper when freezing them.

Hope you enjoy your frozen crayfish as much as I do!

#### **NEW BATCH OF TRAPPYS VIA PANAMA CANAL**

A pallet of new Trappy crayfish traps have just passed the Panama Canal and will be in Los Angeles harbor any day. The timing is good, because my supply of Trappy traps has just hit bottom. A rush of orders this year has put all my trap sale predictions to shame. Every year since I started six years ago has shown an increase in sales. But this year probably had an extra influx as my mentor and main competitor had to close up shop for a while due to family problems.

#### **TRAPPY XL – EXTRA LARGE – COMING SOON**

Yes, there is a new offspring from the Trappy people in Virserum, Sweden. A larger version of the Trappy has been developed and is expected to arrive later this season. I will include an attachment of this newcomer for your preview.