The Acute Angler

November, 2026
Volume 59, Number 11

The monthly newsletter of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club

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President's message

Hope everyone has had a great October and is enjoying the start of the fall fishing we have on the Gulf. Seems just about all our species get turned on by the cooler temps so if you can, take advantage of it. Enjoyed a trip with Newsletter Editor John B last week so he could knock the cobwebs off his Panga and happy to report I got my 9th species! A 2.1-pound bluefish! Every boat on the reef could hear my rather euthanasic response to boating it!!

I still need a Cobia to complete the 10 species and to hold off hard charging and past Men's division winners Dale R & Chic H. With these cooler temps I need to do it soon or they will have left our waters. Should be an exciting finish to the year's race. Ken K and Tim P are engaged in a tight battle for the Elite division, and I know Ken was delighted last week to boat a 24-pound Cobia and now both he and Tim just need a Kingfish to complete the slam.

Many thanks to members Tim P and Gene H who installed my CCA won Rhodan Trolling Motor and 36V 120 Ah LBP Lithium battery. Was so amazing to watch these two install the set up in less than a day. Looking forward to taking them on some Mango and Red Grouper trips this fall as a thank you!

The October meeting, our last general meeting of the year for 2026, was a huge success with Captain Bouncer Smith making the trip down to see and share lots of stories and how to advise. Really a special treat to hear from this TV and guiding legend and everyone came away happy.

Was delighted to announce the officers for 2027 and happy to have long time member Ken K accept the role of President next year and new member Tom Weis volunteer to be his Vice President. Long term Treasurer Debby K is staying on, and Tom B is renewing his role as Secretary and John B as Newsletter Editor. Could not have had the year we did without their outstanding service to the club.

We have lots to do this fall:

- Two tournaments are left, we are considering rescheduling the Fall 9 species all ports Tournament on November 7th with a weigh in at Betts Big T in Chiefland.

- The Redfish, Trout, and Flounder Round-up in Steinhatchee on December 5th.

- AND we have the famous Ellett Auction and Low Country Boil, moved to a daytime event for the first time, on Saturday November 14th from 1 to 5. Please look at your tackle and boat stuff and see if anything could be donated, remember, one man's trash is another man's treasure! The great meal, cooked by master chef Virgil Cooper, is free to all members and their families in good standing. Please consider making a fishing tackle donation to help the club fund our activities for 2027.

Hope to see you at our fall events and on the water! So, until then, tight lines and following seas to all.

John Ebbs
2025 & 2026 GOFC President
352-213-4350

From the Editor:

You may notice that the newsletter looks a little different this month. The reason being, MicroSoft decided to discontinue supporting Publisher, the software I used to create and format the newsletter. They gave their users at least a year's notice before pulling the plug on September 30th. Naturally, I didn't do much about finding a replacement until the middle of this month… Ryan Kremser stepped into the breach and suggested using Adobe's InDesign as well as some templates he'd already developed when he was the newsletter editor. Ryan assures me that InDesign is vastly superior to Publisher and once I figure out which of the 1,001 buttons and dropdown menus to use, I'll never look back. Well, I'm not there yet and have spent many hours cursing MicroSoft and the abomination that is InDesign. My wife tells me that learning something new is good for my brain. She may be right, but I still miss the software I knew how to use and didn't need to consult Gemini just to figure out how to do stuff that was so simple. Rant over.

So anyway, please forgive some of the clumsy formatting and empty spaces.With time I expect I'll get the hang of this new software and if you have any stories or pictures to be included in fture newsletters please send them to me.

John Byatt—Newsletter Editor
jcbyatt@gmail.com
Cell: 352-727-8029

The mission of the Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club is

to promote and support recreational saltwater fishing in the Big Bend area;

to provide educational and recreational experiences for its members of all ages;

and to promote responsible conservation of saltwater resources.

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Steinhatchee Report: Capt. Bobbi Brady

November in Steinhatchee is all about those cooling water temps. As things chill down, focus on mid-morning and late-afternoon tides when the sun has a chance to warm up the flats. You'll want to target those sandy potholes and grass edges where the trout like to stage and fed.

Stay patient—slow your presentation down and use subtle twitches to trigger those strikes. The redfish can be a bit more spread out but keep working that incoming tide as it warms the bottom; work your way toward the shore with the tide. Spoons and gold twitch baits are my go-to for this time of year.

Florida Saltwater Flats Fishing Charters: 352-318-8429

Upcoming Events

Fall Tournament - Saturday November 7th More details to follow

GOFC Auction and Low Country Boil - Saturday November 14th 1 - 5 pm at the Ellet's home. This is a members only event and reminders, with directions, will be sent out to all members via email. Start looking around for items you no longer need to bring to the auction.

Trout, Flounder & Redfish Roundup - Saturday December 5th
Fish from any of the GOFC ports, weigh-in at Weigh in will be held from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM at Bett's Big T in Chiefland, FL.

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Captain's Log
Spanish mackerel

By Joe Richard

I am not entirely a stranger to Spanish mackerel; over the years my fishing mates and I have always relished a fight with these toothy speedsters. Fast action and a full fish box, that was our goal. A bespattered boat and lost lures was just part of the program. Each November we'd run out several miles to various sandbars within sight of land, and toss rusty jigs and spoons, knowing some would be lost. But the mackerel, migrating south, were short on baitfish in that cooling water, and attacked our artificials with reckless abandon.

Back home, we'd shrink-wrap the fillets like Alaskans do with salmon, and the mackerel is still our go-to fish for the dinner. That meat turns very white, when baked for 15 minutes. (NOT fried).

I had despaired that mackerel wouldn't show up this year at all, but they finally up during the first couple of weeks in October. An unwelcome, record-late showing, but they finally arrived.

There have been memorable days out there spent with this Gulf-wandering fish. A major benchmark came one day when we loaded the landing net with my biggest mackerel ever at the time. Oddly, it attacked a floating topwater plug called the Chug Bug – slashing it repeatedly, even jumping over the lure like a small kingfish. When I finally reared back into solid weight, my first reaction was to lighten the reel's drag. The big fish plowed by the boat and the young angler with me reached hopefully for it with a small landing net, but I yelled to hold up; this mackerel was still in first gear. Right on cue, the reel sang and that mackerel bolted 30 yards. Somehow the 12-pound line and 20-pound Fluorocarbon leader held on. The fish wouldn't quite fit in our landing net and one of the treble hooks broke off in the struggle. Caught in six feet of water over grass bottom, it was dragged aboard and later back at the marina, weighed six pounds even in front of a half-dozen gawkers. I carefully filleted it and hours later one of those big fillets graced the table for a party of four, matched with a magnum of chilled white wind to ease the day's pains. We've seen bigger mackerel out there. Years later I landed one that weighed 6.4 pounds and we had to follow it with the boat to keep line on the reel. It grabbed a gold spoon, again without a wire leader. That mackerel was so big, it had a downward-curved beak. Luck was with us, which doesn't always happens when a big one hits. Another day, forgetting the landing net at home, we tried to lift a four-pounder aboard and part of the treble hook broke off.

Another time on a charter, we had six spoons cut off while using 40-pound mono leaders. Those bigger mackerel have a more powerful bite and wicked teeth. We could see a sizable flash in the water about 30 inches long before each cutoff. We've also had some fast, 40 yard runs in the same depth of water ending in broken line. They were either mega-mackerel or lone kingfish.

More notes from observing mackerel schools: Like most fish, there are days when they hit just right with solid hookups. Other days they play the devil with tackle, eating swivels and chomping through 40-pound mono leaders like they're nothing. Unlike trout, mackerel don't seem to mind thin but dark wire leader---at least we've caught them by the box load while doing so. When mackerel are leader- or lure-shy, you can at least see them following the lure and make adjustments. If they're in a feeding frenzy, chopping up minnows, then pull out the dregs from your tackle box – rusty jig heads, and adorn them with plastic tails that somehow never seem to catch fish. And hide those killer trout baits from your boat crew. Why? During a mackerel melee, people are liable to tie on any lure within reach. Those are days when your favorite MirrOdine or Live Target plug won't live 10 seconds out there. Feeding mackerel schools are a harsh environment. That 12-pound line used for trophy trout become fragile as spider web when surrounded by eager, sharp-tooth mackerel. One can stay sporty in a Blitz with 12 and suffer real losses, or use heavier line, get mean and fill the box. That's when a hard

20-pound line like Ande works for us. A foot of light brown piano wire and a tiny black swivel works best. Keep a dozen pre-made short wires in the tackle box. In any event, you want light steel leader when the action starts. Heavy kingfish wire of 69 to 90 pounds is too heavy, unless you're trolling fast enough to hide that wire in the boat's bubbly wake.

Mackerel have keen eyesight and prefer clean, green water, so don't waste time fishing in chocolate milk. Speed is the key: a slow retrieve may only attract follows, critical stares and maybe a few bumps. Speed and flash are

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required for solid hookups; I call it crank-and-yank. That's why you want a fast-retrieve reel for this kind of work, and a seven or eight-foot rod with a broad sweep. A short rod and slow reel here may not produce. I've become fond of trolling areas with a 4-inch Huntington drone spoon, which worked recently, landing 10 mackerel before the line parted. Turns out, those devils had chewed up five feet of hard, 20-pound Ande line until it gave out. For the next trip, I tied eight feet of 30-pound line to the reel, along with 8 inches of wire.

Caution advised with wire leader made in China for an American company. I recently broke off three fish in a row when setting the hook or lifting a small fish into the boat. Each time, the wire broke at the haywire twist, something we've never seen before. American-made Malin wire costs four times as much, but you can be sure we tossed the cheap stuff and went back to Malin. Check that wire company's label before buying and keep most of that bag of Malin wire at home, away from salt spray or air, where it will last for years.

Salmon fishing (and occasional catching)

By John Byatt

Just over two years ago, my youngest son moved to the Oregon coast to start a new job. A few months later, his older brother also decided to move across the country to live in Oregon. As a consequence, I now make at least a couple of trips a year to visit them, explore the state and try my hand at the various fishing opportunities found along the coast, numerous rivers and lakes.

Although fishing is very different in the Pacific northwest (for one, the water is a dang site colder!), as in Florida, opportunities are limited if you don't have a boat and are confined to the shoreline. With that in mind and on a meager budget, Nick bought his first boat. A pre-1980 vintage 12-foot aluminum-hulled skiff powered by a 1978 ten horse Honda outboard, plus trailer, all for $500. The boat was in a pretty sad state, but after he replaced all the wooden items, including the transom, bought a new carburetor for the motor, installed a Li battery powered trolling motor and replaced the trailer lights and wiring, it was almost as good as new. Nick was raring to christen it with salmon blood when I visited earlier in October.

Almost all the rivers in Oregon have a run of Coho (silver) and Chinook (king) salmon, as well as steelhead trout. The natural wild spawned fish are supplemented with hatchery-raised fish that are released into many of the watersheds as smolts and marked by clipping off the adipose fin. Pacific salmon spend the majority of their life in the ocean and only return to the river of their origin to spawn. Not coincidentally, I timed my most recent trip with the predicted peak run of fish in the Coos river mouth.

As you'd expect, salmon fishing during the annual fall run is extremely popular, but finding a ramp and parking is not a problem. There are at least half-dozen public boat ramps around Coos Bay, all with tons of trailer parking, good floating jetties for loading and most are free.

Now Nick had tested out his 'new' boat before I arrived and discovered some of its quirks. Surprisingly for a motor that's almost 50 years old, it runs very smoothly once warmed up. But there's a trick to starting it… Twenty plus pulls on the starting cord are required when the motor is cold. However, Nick inadvertently discovered that if the motor is in gear and the throttle wide open, one or two pulls is enough to have it fire right up. When using this technique, it is best to have the boat securely tied to the dock to minimize chances of an unplanned swim. Top speed with one person on board is 19 mph. Add another person and that drops to 10 mph… Normal tidal range is around 8 feet, which means when close to the river mouth during mid outgoing, there's a heck of a current and it's slow going against the flow, so we planned trips carefully based on the tide.

Talking to the locals, watching YouTube videos and consulting Google informed us that the recommended way to catch salmon in the lower reaches of the river is to troll with the current close to slack tide using a flasher (or dodger), 4-6 oz cannonball weight and a plug cut herring secured with a moocher rig. This rig also has three 6-bead swivels to minimize line twist from the flasher and green label herring which is cut so that it spins. Day one; it takes us close to half-an-hour to get all rigged up and deal with a setup that is almost eight feet from the first swivel to the terminal hook on the mooching rig. We hook nothing but weeds and sundry items on the boat.

Day two; a change of location and a simplified setup. Close to the marina at the mouth of the Coos River is a point and small sandy beach where shore bound anglers cast and retrieve six weight spinners for hours on end, and according to the local bait shop, more than occasionally catch salmon. Apparently, coho salmon follow the shoreline from the river mouth so many of them are within casting distance of shore. Based on local lore, the only spinners that catch fish are pink and silver. The tackle stores have every color in stock, except those with pink and silver blades… We hope the salmon are partial to chartreuse as well. After

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drifting up and down the shoreline for a couple of hours and again catching nothing but weed, I announce that it's time to move to another location. As I'm retrieving my spinner for the last time I'm absolutely shocked when a fish grabs it! To say that my son and I were excited is a gross understatement. The folks fishing from shore had probably never seen such an exuberant celebration over boating a fish. We were so worried it would fall off the hook that I horsed it in and my son netted it while it was still green. It took a good 10 minutes to disengage all three treble hooks from the fish and landing net and by the time the salmon was subdued, there was blood on everything within a four-foot radius.

On the way home, we bought a digital scale so that we had a weight for bragging purposes and six pack of local brew. The coho salmon still had its adipose fin, so was wild spawned and weighed just over 9lb (about average for the Coos River). We had seven thick steaks and smoked the tail end fillets and had salmon for dinner four days in a row.

I'd like to say that we went on to catch several more, but it based on our experience and talking to others on the river, it looks like you need to put in a lot of hours for each salmon caught. We tried the same spot and technique two days later and then another day trolled a different part of the river using keel weights to keep the spinners down in the 30 – 15-foot range. Saw plenty of fish on the sonar, that we assumed to be salmon, but only caught little hatchery raised smolts.

I've caught salmon before, but always on a charter boat with someone else's tackle. It's a much greater sense of accomplishment to do it without professional assistance. On the flip side, we likely would have caught a few more with a knowledgeable guide. Nick though, is hooked: He's already looking for a bigger boat!

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Fishing Report Crystal River, FL:
By Capt. Andrew Meyer

High winds have taken some days off our calendars this last month, but in between fronts, we are experiencing some very good fishing! Transition periods, like the one we are in right now, can be challenging if you don't understand what is happening, but can offer incredible opportunities if you know how to adjust.

One of the best things about fall fishing is the variety of species that are accessible and often in the same general zones. The weather itself is also such an enjoyable part of the equation. Even on days when the bite may be a bit slower, it's often so nice out that "just being on the water" is a win in and of itself. You can slow down, relax, breathe, watch the migratory eagles, spoonbills, and white pelicans, soak up the sun on a cool morning, and just take in the beauty of the Nature Coast.

All that said, we are here to catch fish, so let's talk about what fish are doing as the water cools and what adjustments to make to stay on them.

It is by no means cold enough to force fish up the creeks yet, and not even cold enough to clear all the fish off the perimeter areas. This means fish will be in multiple zones, but most local fish want to be in staging areas where they are not too far away from their colder weather haunts. This is where, if you've paid attention to water temperature and where you have found fish in other seasons, it will really pay off when there are temperature shifts. There tend to be a lot of temperature fluctuations this time of year, so it's not a one-size-fits-all approach, but we can generalize pretty well about what this time period entails.

Let's start off with snook. Fall is my favorite time to target snook because they are generally less finicky than the spring fish. If you are looking to get your first big snook, or maybe your PB, this is an excellent window to do it in. Snook are very actively feeding

in preparation for the cooler weather ahead that will ultimately drive them into the rivers and springs, and they aren't particularly picky about bait selection. Live pinfish, finger mullet, jigs, and topwater plugs have been on fire when fished around points, oyster bars, hard-bottom islands, and rocks where water flow creates ambush points.

While we are in the late stages of the hot red-fish bite, it is still currently going strong. Reds are a good example of a fish in multiple zones at the moment, but as the water cools, more and more reds are moving off of the very perimeter structure and setting up just slightly more inside, where they will have easy access to the creeks when the time comes. Live shrimp have begun to be the dominant bait choice most days, although we are still seeing intermittent pinfish and cut bait bites. Keep this in mind if you throw artificials as well. It's time to scale down the profile a bit and go to either literal shrimp imitations or at least baits of similar size and profile.

Trout may be the fish a lot of anglers are most excited about ramping up as the water cools. The bite has improved over the last few weeks, but we are a few degrees from it really firing off. Typically, right about the time the redfish bite noticeably slows, the trout will really start to pop off. Both soft plastic jigs and live shrimp are excellent choices this time of year. It more or less boils down to preference until the water gets severely cold. Trout are also spread through multiple zones but are starting to move in and show signs of schooling up more.

Black drum are another fish that gets more into the mix as things cool. More of the juvenile drum that are preferred for table fare will be moving into hard-bottom areas near and in our creeks and river systems. These fish

are often overlooked but are incredibly fun to catch and to eat. Live shrimp on a light jighead or a small crab is all you need.

We have a few flounder being caught over sand-bottom areas and are starting to see migratory species like pompano and Spanish mackerel making appearances on the flats and near the barge canal channels and islands. Live shrimp, small spoons, or jigs work best.

Fall tarpon are also around in decent numbers right now. It takes some dedication to catch these fish, but it can be an excellent time of year to jump a big poon. We are seeing a good number of fish around many of the deeper channels and a few on the flats and in the rivers. Tarpon will be feeding on a variety of different fall baits, depending on the area and what is present at the moment. Try to "match the hatch" as much as possible.

Some of these fall fronts do contain very high winds. Make sure to be up to date on forecasts when planning trips or deciding whether or not to hit the water. There are plenty of good days to take advantage of this time of year!

I have a handful of November dates left, but spots are filling fast! If you would like to book a trip, message or call 352-601-8786 to lock up your spot today.

Until next time, be safe and good luck out there!

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Charlie's Kitchen
By Charlie Courtney

Seafood Stews

In an earlier column I discussed seafood boils in which various seafoods and vegetables are boiled in seasoned water using methods and seasonings that vary by the different regions of the country. In this month's column I will discuss seafood stews and provide a recipe for each of the three best known seafood stews in the U.S. — gumbo, bouillabaisse, and cioppino. All three of these stews are alike in that they each originated as a poor man's meal that made use of whatever was locally available and inexpensive.

Unlike boils in which the cooking liquid is discarded before serving, soups and stews include the cooking liquid as part of the meal. A seafood stew differs from a more liquid seafood soup, such as a chowder or bisque, in that the stew contains far more solids, and the liquids are reduced to acting more like a sauce. In contrast, the liquid portion is more dominant with a soup. That said, while a bouillabaisse is considered a stew, it actually is somewhat of a hybrid between a soup and a boil.

Recipes

Gumbo

Gumbo is a Louisiana staple characterized by a dark roux, the Cajun "holy trinity" of onion, green pepper, and celery, and thickened with either okra or filé powder (dried sassafras leaves). The seafood may include shrimp, blue crab, oysters, or crawfish. Less often lobster, scallops, or a mild white fish may be used. It also may include a variety of other main ingredients, such as chicken, poultry, smoked sausage, or greens. The base broth may be made from chicken, seafood, or vegetables. Traditionally, gumbo is served with white rice — the rice may be cooked in with the gumbo or the gumbo is poured over the rice after cooking. That said, I have successfully substituted riced cauliflower for the white rice as a low carb diet — the gumbo is poured over cooked riced cauliflower.

Okra was originally used as the thickening agent in gumbo, and the word "gumbo" is thought to be West African in origin, coming to us from the word "ki ngumbo", which means "okra" in several West African Languages. Filé powder, which originated with the Choctaw tribe, is often used as a thickening agent in New Orleans gumbos in place of okra. However, it is added only at the very end of cooking or sprinkled on to a plate of gumbo as if it were salt or pepper. If added to a still boiling gumbo, it will form strings rather than thicken the stew.

Gumbo has both Creole and Cajun influences. Cajun gumbo originated in French-speaking rural southwestern Louisiana, favors dark, chocolate-colored roux or file powder as a thickener, chicken or duck and andouille sausage as the meat, and uses no tomatoes. Creole gumbo originated from a fusion of French, Spanish, African, and Caribbean cuisines in New Orleans, uses a lighter roux as the base, various seafoods as the meat, okra or file powder as the thickener, and frequently includes tomatoes. That said, some local gumbo recipes may omit the roux or feature beef, pork, or wild game — whatever the local woods, pastures, and waters of Louisiana may yield.

New Orleans Creole Gumbo

Recipe from Allrecipes: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/216888/good-new-orleans-creole-gumbo/

INGREDIENTS
1 cup all-purpose flour
¾ cup bacon drippings
1 cup coarsely chopped celery
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1 large green bell pepper, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound andouille sausage, sliced
3 quarts water
6 cubes beef bouillon
1 tablespoon white sugar
salt to taste
2 tablespoons hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco), or to taste
½ teaspoon Cajun seasoning blend (such as Tony Chachere's), or to taste
4 bay leaves
½ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes
1 (6 ounce) can tomato sauce
4 teaspoons file powder, divided
2 tablespoons bacon drippings
2 (10 ounce) packages frozen cut okra, thawed
2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar

1 pound lump crabmeat
3 pounds uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

DIRECTIONS
Make the roux: Whisk together flour and 3/4 cup bacon drippings in a large, heavy saucepan over medium-low heat until smooth. Cook roux, whisking constantly, until it turns a rich mahogany brown color. This can take 20 to 30 minutes; watch heat carefully and whisk constantly or roux will burn. Remove from heat; continue whisking until mixture stops cooking.

Make the gumbo: Place celery, onion, green bell pepper, and garlic into the work bowl of a food processor, and pulse until all vegetables are very finely chopped.

Stir vegetables into roux, and mix in sliced sausage. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until vegetables are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Combine water and beef bouillon cubes in a large Dutch oven or soup pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir until bouillon cubes dissolve, then whisk roux mixture into the boiling water.

Reduce heat to a simmer and mix in sugar, salt, hot pepper sauce, Cajun seasoning, bay leaves, thyme, stewed tomatoes, and tomato sauce. Simmer soup over low heat for 1 hour; mix in 2 teaspoons of file gumbo powder at the 45-minute mark.

Meanwhile, melt 2 tablespoons bacon drippings in a skillet over medium heat. Add okra and vinegar and cook for 15 minutes; remove okra with a slotted spoon, and stir into the simmering gumbo.

Mix in crabmeat, shrimp, and Worcestershire sauce, and simmer until flavors have blended, 45 more minutes. Stir in 2 more teaspoons of file gumbo powder just before serving.

Serve hot over rice and enjoy! Those of us on low carb/diabetic diets can substitute riced cauliflower, which works surprisingly well. Gumbo can be frozen or refrigerated, and many people like it better the day after preparation when the flavors have had more time to develop and meld.

Bouillabaisse

Bouillabaisse is a traditional French fish stew that originated from fishermen working in Marseille on the Mediterranean coast of France. In the U.S. this dish is most commonly found in the major port cities, especially those having high end French bistros and seafood restaurants, such as New York, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle. Despite its high brow reputation in the U.S., bouillabaisse originated as a working fisherman's meal made from the fish that did not sell that day. It is broth focused and made with a saffron-laced broth, assorted local fish, and shellfish. Traditionally a bouillabaisse used four or more Mediterranean rockfish species, including red scorpionfish (rascasse), sea robin, and conger eel. American versions usually use a firm white fish (cod or snapper), shrimp, mussels, and clams. After cooking the broth is separated from the seafood and served as a soup with grilled bread and rouille, a spicy garlic mayonnaise. The fish and other seafood then follow, served as a separate dish.

The name "bouillabaisse" is associated with the Provençal cooking instructions to bring the broth to a boil and then lower the heat, reflecting the traditional preparation technique..The broth typically incorporates vegetables such as leeks, onions, tomatoes, and celery, while potatoes may be cooked in the liquid or served alongside the seafood. Rouille, traditionally prepared with olive oil, garlic, saffron, and cayenne pepper, adds richness and a distinctive spicy flavor. It is usually spread on slices of toasted bread, which are served with the broth.

Several characteristics distinguish bouillabaisse from other fish stews. Its distinctive flavor comes from the combination of Provençal herbs and spices, along with the use of local Mediterranean fish, often including varieties with bones that contribute depth and richness to the stock. Traditionally, different types of fish are added to the pot in stages according to their cooking requirements, allowing each variety to cook properly without becoming overdone.

The traditional presentation in Marseille is also distinctive. The seasoned broth is served first in individual soup bowls, accompanied by the toasted bread and rouille. The cooked fish and other seafood are then presented separately on a large serving platter. This two-part service highlights both the flavorful broth and the variety of seafood that make bouillabaisse a celebrated dish of Provençal cuisine.

Julia Child's Simple French Bouillabaisse

By Karen Tedesco (https://familystylefood.com/julia-childs-bouillabaisse-recipe/)

This is Julia Child's Provençal bouillabaisse — saffron-scented broth, mussels, shrimp, and flaky white fish, served with crusty bread and a roasted red pepper rouille. A real French seafood production that takes under an hour.

INGREDIENTS
½ cup (118 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup (150 g) chopped onion
1 cup (89 g) chopped leek
4 cloves smashed garlic
2 or 3 large, ripe tomatoes, chopped or 2 cups canned chopped tomatoes
2 ½ quarts (2.5 l) water
Fresh herb sprigs: thyme, parsley, fennel fronds and basil (in any combination)
one 2-inch wide strip of fresh orange peel (optional)
½ teaspoon crumbled saffron
1 tablespoon sea salt
3-4 pounds (2 kg) fish heads, bones, trimmings, shrimp shells
1 pound (450 g) peeled shrimp (save the shells for the stock)
1 pound (450 g) cod, halibut or other flaky white fish, cut into large chunks
1 pound (450 g) mussels or clams, scrubbed and mussels debearded
Crusty bread, sliced, for serving

ROUILLE
2 roasted and peeled red bell peppers, (jarred peppers are fine)
½ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper, or more to taste
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 peeled garlic clove
¼ cup (28 g) fresh breadcrumbs, or ground almonds
¼ cup (15 g) fresh parsley leaves
Fine sea salt, about 1/2 teaspoon or to taste
⅓ cup (75 ml) extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS
To make the broth fortified with lots of seafood shells and trimmings: Heat the oil in a tall pot (such as an 8 quart stockpot) over medium heat. Add the onion and leeks and cook gently until softened. Stir in the garlic and cook for a minute until fragrant, then add the tomatoes, water, herbs, orange peel, saffron, salt and fish bones and shrimp shells.

Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat so that the broth bubbles slowly without boiling and cook for 30 minutes. Then strain the broth into a large bowl or another pot and discard the solids.

Pour the broth back into the stockpot and bring to a boil. Add the shrimp and cook until they turn pink, a minute or two. Add the rest of the fish and shellfish, cover and simmer until the mussels or clams open (this will just take a few minutes). Taste the soup and add more salt and freshly ground pepper if needed.

MAKE THE ROUILLE:
Puree the red peppers, cayenne, lemon juice, garlic, breadcrumbs, parsley and salt in a food processor until smooth. Slowly add the olive oil while processing to form a paste. Toast the bread and brush with olive oil. Serve the soup with bread and rouille.

NOTES
For a heartier soup, serve over cooked broken vermicelli, orzo or some other small pasta shape.

The broth can be prepared up to a day in advance and stored in the refrigerator. To use, bring to a simmer, add the seafood, and cook as above.

Cioppino

Cioppino is the least known of the three seafood stews covered here. It is a hearty, tomato based Italian-American creation that originated in San Francisco with immigrants from Genoa and Naples who would contribute whatever unsold seafood was left over at the end of day to a communal pot. The seafood, usually consisting of some combination of fish, shrimp, crab, clams, and mussels, was simmered in a tomato and wine-based broth along with oregano, garlic, onions, and herbs. Tangy sourdough bread, another iconic San Francisco food, is usually served with the cioppino for dipping. The key cooking technique is layering the different types of seafood, i.e., adding them at different times so they cook perfectly without becoming mushy.

Recipe by Lena Abraham from the delish web site:

INGREDIENTS
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 bulb fennel, chopped, fronds reserved
2 shallots, minced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 cups dry white wine
1 (28-oz.) can crushed tomatoes
1 (8-oz.) bottle clam juice
2 cups water
2 dried bay leaves
1 2"-thick strip orange zest (optional)
1 dozen littleneck clams, scrubbed
1 dozen mussels, scrubbed
1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 lb. halibut, skin removed and cut into 1" pieces
1/4 cup freshly chopped parsley, for serving
2 lemons, cut into wedges, for serving
Baguette or sourdough bread for serving

DIRECTIONS
Step 1: Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add fennel and shallots and cook until soft and translucent, 6 minutes. Add garlic, oregano, and red pepper flakes and season with salt and pepper. Cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.

Step 2: Add wine and let boil until reduced by half, 3 to 5 minutes, scraping up browned bits from the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon. Add tomatoes, clam juice, water, bay leaves, and orange zest (if using). Stir to combine, bring to a low simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

Step 3: Remove bay leaves and orange zest. Add clams to simmering broth, cover, and cook for 5 minutes. Uncover, add mussels in an even layer, then shrimp, then halibut. Do not stir. Cover again and cook for 5 more minutes, or until all clams and mussels are opened and shrimp and fish is cooked through and opaque. Discard any unopened mussels and clams. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Step 4: To serve, ladle the stew into bowls and top with fennel fronds and chopped parsley. Serve with sourdough bread and lemon wedges on the side.