Delicious fish dinners start on the water. Caring for your catch right away is important for the flavor and quality of your table fare later. Fish taste best if they are killed right away and kept ice-cold. And, it’s a humane way to care for any fish. Avoid spoiling your fresh-caught meals with this guide.

For the very best in table fare follow these steps:

1. Fill a cooler with ice; lots of ice. Chipped ice is best.
2. When you catch a fish you want to keep, dispatch it straight away. A solid whack over the eyes works nicely.
3. Add a bit of water in your cooler creating a slurry.
4. Drop the dead fish into this ‘slurry’ as you catch them. Keep adding ice regularly.
5. At any break in the action remove the stomach and gills and drop the fish back into the slurry.
6. At camp, remove the fish from the slurry, and pack into a cooler or another fish bin, ensuring that each fish is well covered with ice, and the gill and stomach cavities are also filled with ice.

Taking proper care of your catch is the only way you’re going to get the best from it. Commercial anglers know the best way to keep any fish fresh is get them on ice. Follow these steps and you will be pleasantly surprised at the difference in taste.

For more info about fishing in Wyoming, visit wgfd.wyo.gov