

Carp.

...in six or seven hours they come ...

There are three kinds of carp, known as the Leather carp (cyprinus carpio), Scale carp, and Mirrow carp. All three are very hardy and if placed in moss will live 24 hours after being taken from the water. Leather carp do not have scales except around the fins. Scale carp are the most prolific; the leather carp grows the fastest; and mirrow carp are intermediate between them. When young the bones are troublesome; when 4 pounds and over the bones are easily removed.

Carp were originally from Central Asia, and were introduced into Europe from there a few centuries ago; into Austria in 1227; into England in 1504; and into the United States about 1830.

Carp spawn once a year, in May. They must not be disturbed during the spawning season, and if pike are allowed in the same pond carp will not spawn. Pike are amongst the greatest enemies of the young carp and have been known to eat, in one week, a quantity of fish equal to twice their own weight.

Carp sometimes spawn when two years old, but more often not until three years. The female is a larger fish than the male. The ova of a five year old carp contains approximately 500,000 eggs; individuals going as high as 1,200,000. The eggs are about the size of No 8 shot, and when deposited lie singly. The enemies of carp include minnows, frogs, trout, roaches, turtles, catfish, and rats, also kingfishers, cranes, fish hawks and other birds. Care should be taken to protect carp ponds from all such enemies. Frogs especially have been found very destructive in fish ponds but it has been noticed that ducks can be allowed into fish ponds and while they will extirminate the frogs they do not seem to injure or destroy the fish. (U. S. Bull.VI, p386.)

The average weight of carp is about pounds but some have been known to weigh as much as 50 or 75 pounds. The flesh contains, in proportion, as much nutritious substance as the finest of beef, and is peculiarly suited for making a savory dish. As a food fish they are equal, or superior, to catfish, suckers, and perch, while some consider them equal to trout, bass and shad. They are fit for the table from October to May, but during, and for several months after spawning the flesh is soft. They are excellent when cleaned, washed, well salted and peppered both inside and out, wrapped in buttered paper; then the buttered paper enclosed in a sheet of newspaper; the whole thing then dipped for a few moments in cold water, and finally placed on a bed of hot coals of an open fire. In about half an hour they are ready for the table.

During the winter months carp hibernate and the length of time they remain in this condition depends on the water temperature. In Texan waters it rarely retires for the winter, while in Maine and Minnesota it is dormant practically half the year. If one part of a carp pond has sufficient depth of water to enable them to properly hibernate in during winter, the remainder of pond may be so shallow that the fish may not be wholly submerged. A good spawning pond will produce 35,000 to 40,000 carp per acre. They thrive on butter-milk and scraps from the table, cooked cereals, and vegetables such as rice, corn, wheat, rye, potatoes, cabbage, turnips, lettuce, pumpkins, melons, etc. They also eat meat, bread, salad, worms, etc. They become very tame in confinement and will come to hand when feeding time arrives, just as domestic animals do.

Carp are fish that are especially adapted to small bodies of still water, which need not be free from mud or sediment. They thrive best in warm water: cold water retarding their growth, but not killing them. They can be frozen stiff time and time again but

