

Gastronomic Event This Calendar Year Means Tasty 'Eulachon'

By
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For people who calendar their year by gastronomic events, spring means a tasty treat of hooligan. These smelt are available in the early spring as they ascend the glacial streams to spawn.

Where these streams are crossed by roads, the average person can dip net his own. In Ketchikan, a boat or two may bring in a quantity for

sale. However they are obtained, they are a spring event.

The name Hooligan is an easier phonetic version of the Chinook name Eulachon. Be-as-it-may, the fish is cherished for the flavor and richness of its flesh.

It has a high oil content; so much that, when the fish is dried, it may be used like a candle and the name candle-fish is also applied to it.

Hooligan may reach 12 inches long and have adapted to glacial streams for spawning. The eggs attach themselves to grains of sand and hatch in 2 to 3 weeks. The muddy water hides them from the birds or animals that would eat them.

The current carries the young fish to sea where they grow to maturity. They are seldom taken except on their spawning run.

Fried crisp, the little fellows are delicious. Preparation is often no more than washing off the glacial sand and popping them into the skillet.

The bones are soft and may be disregarded. Without a meal or two of these tasty little fish in the early spring, the year somehow seems to have gotten off to a bad start.