

Fish fried the way you like it

THE WHITE RIVER Fish Market and Restaurant is as close as you can come to a river-bank fish fry. "You pick 'em, we fry 'em," is the restaurant's motto.

There is nothing fishy about the price; it's one of the best bargains in town.

Picking them is almost as much fun as catching them, and a lot easier. There's not even a limit at White River. "How hungry are you, honey?" is the cook's only concern.

Choose your catch of the day at a counter stocked with a variety of lightly breaded fish: trout fillet, boneless ocean perch, red snapper, buffalo, channel catfish, salmon steak, halibut steak, frog legs.

White River cooks will fix the fish any way you like them, as long as you like them fried. Your selection goes right into the deep fryer.

WHILE THE FISH was frying we had a half a dozen fresh oysters on the half shell (\$3.50 a dozen). White River often counts seven oysters to the half dozen and 13 to the dozen, which gets things off to a generous start.

Two whole channel catfish (\$3.20 lb.) were fried just right, dark brown and crisp on the outside and cooked all the way through. The trick in cooking whole catfish is to cook them thoroughly but quickly, so they're still succulent. These weren't only just right, they were downright delicious.

The ocean perch fillets (\$3.20 lb.), cooked more lightly, were golden brown. The light breading is perfect for the delicate fillets. The fish isn't smothered in heavy batter. Even fried fish should not have to wear an oversized coat with the sleeves dragging.

The perch fillets were even better than the channel catfish.

Our dinner for two (oysters, catfish, eight perch fillets, an order of cole slaw and one of french fries, and two drinks) was under \$10.

Later, White River owner O.T. Fallis said the secret of good fried fish is getting the grease hot enough. Otherwise the fish will be soggy and will fall apart. Fallis says 350 degrees is the best cooking temperature.

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Eating out by Connie Cronley

are deep fried in vegetable oil or lard; peanut oil won't withstand that high temperature. Even in a skillet, Fallis said, it takes a lot of grease to fry fish properly.

The fish market has been selling fresh fish for 48 years. No wonder they know how to cook fish. Fallis' father, a Tulsa produce dealer, bought his first load of fish from the White River in Arkansas. The name stuck, like a well set hook. The restaurant was added after World War II.

Today, White River's fish come

from Oklahoma and Florida. The shrimp (\$5.80 a dozen) come from the Gulf. Lobster is also available in the extensive fresh fish market portion of White River.

The restaurant is closed Sunday and Monday, open 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday.

RECOMMENDATION: ★ ★ ★
White River Fish Market and Restaurant (1708 N. Sheridan), features down-home fried fish at neighborly prices.

Ratings:

★ ★ ★ ★ - Superior

★ ★ ★ - Very Good

★ ★ - Good

★ - Average