



CLASSY

CAT

Pond fish comparable to ocean options

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Delacata Style Catfish swims into the Jackson retail market on the tailfin end of August's National Catfish Month with a free Friday tasting at McDade's at Maywood Mart.

The tasting, offered by Yazoo City-based Simmons Catfish farm and processing plant, celebrates McDade's as the first Jackson grocery to carry the prime-cut catfish fillet, 4-6 p.m. on Friday, with country music station Miss 103 participating with a live broadcast and prize giveaways.

Delacata Style Catfish is a sustainable, freshwater fish comparable to such thick-fleshed, mild-flavored ocean fish as redfish, snapper and grouper but not as pricey, the nonprofit Catfish Institute reports.

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ABOVE Coffee-crusted Delacata Style Catfish will open eyes to the premium whitefish some have described as the "filet mignon of catfish." THE CATFISH INSTITUTE

INSIDE Coffee-crusted Delacata steaks, 3D

Delacata

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Chefs at several area restaurants have featured Delacata dishes, including Bravo's Karl Gorline and Dan Blumenthal, Parlor Market's Matthew Kajdan and Gary Hawkins at Sophia's at The Fairview Inn, all in Jackson, Robert Rushton at Local 463 in Madison and Jay Parmegiani at Roca in Vicksburg. Friday's promotion represents its debut in the local grocery market.

The Catfish Institute worked with consultants, industry leaders, processors and farmers for several years to develop a product that's further processed and good for grilling, sauteing or blackening, The Catfish Institute president Roger Barlow said.

"This is the catfish that's perfect for those" nonfried applications as the trend moves from less frying at home, Barlow said. "We needed a larger, thicker cut that actually competes well with grouper, redfish and some other higher-end products."

The name change specifically designates a better cut of fish with a better name and, the hope is, equates with an enhanced perception. "It is the filet mignon of the

COFFEE-CRUSTED DELACATA STEAKS

2 7- to 9-ounce Delacata fillets	½ cup garlic powder
½ cup coffee	½ cup onion powder
2 tablespoons canola oil	½ cup crushed ground pepper
½ cup allspice	¼ cup light chili powder
½ cup cinnamon	¼ cup dark chili powder
½ cup cumin	¾ cup dark brown sugar

1. Place coffee in a grinder and process into a fine consistency. Combine remaining spices in a food processor; add ground coffee. Pulse to incorporate all spices. (You may store in an airtight container for up to one month.)
2. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
3. Lightly dust the Delacata with the coffee seasoning.
4. Place oven-safe skillet over high heat; add oil. When oil is hot, add Delacata fillets presentation-side down in skillet. Cook 3 minutes or until nicely browned; then turn. Place skillet in oven for 6 to 7 minutes or until fillets are done.

Source: *The Catfish Institute*

catfish. And it's delicious," said Barlow.

The prime-cut catfish fillet is created from a super-premium selection of U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish, harvested from sustainable freshwater ponds. The fish are hand-trimmed to ensure the fat is removed, for a consistent, prime cut of fish. The mildly sweet flavor works with sauces, marinades or herb rubs.

More versatility with the larger fillet can open more home kitchen doors to top catfish prep beyond the frying pan. "People want something more health conscious," Simmons Catfish sales manager Mark Henderson. "The product will take on an application a chef wants." Sustainability of the farm-raised product is

another plus.

"It adds a new dimension to the catfish business," said Kajdan, executive chef at Parlor Market, which ran Delacata catfish as a feature, grilled with salt and pepper, served over charred watermelon minestrone with couscous, with a jump lump crabmeat and wax bean salad in a citrus creme fraiche.

The Delacata Style Catfish fit with a more restaurant traditional cooking style, Kajdan said — a hearty 10-ounce fillet. "You can do anything you want to do with a Delacata Style Catfish fillet that you would do with any saltwater fish. It just makes it more appealing than the traditional 5- to 7-ounce or 7- to 9-ounce catfish fillet."