

# HINTS THAT MAY HELP

Sometimes people say to me, "Yes, I would serve herrings more often if it wasn't for their bones." But there is really no difficulty about boning a herring. Sometimes the fishmonger will undertake the work but if he's busy, well, it's quite easy to scale and bone the fish yourself if you go the right way to work. It's just a knack which comes with practice. You may find you have the knack straight away, in which case if you have the time you'll enjoy doing the herrings yourself.

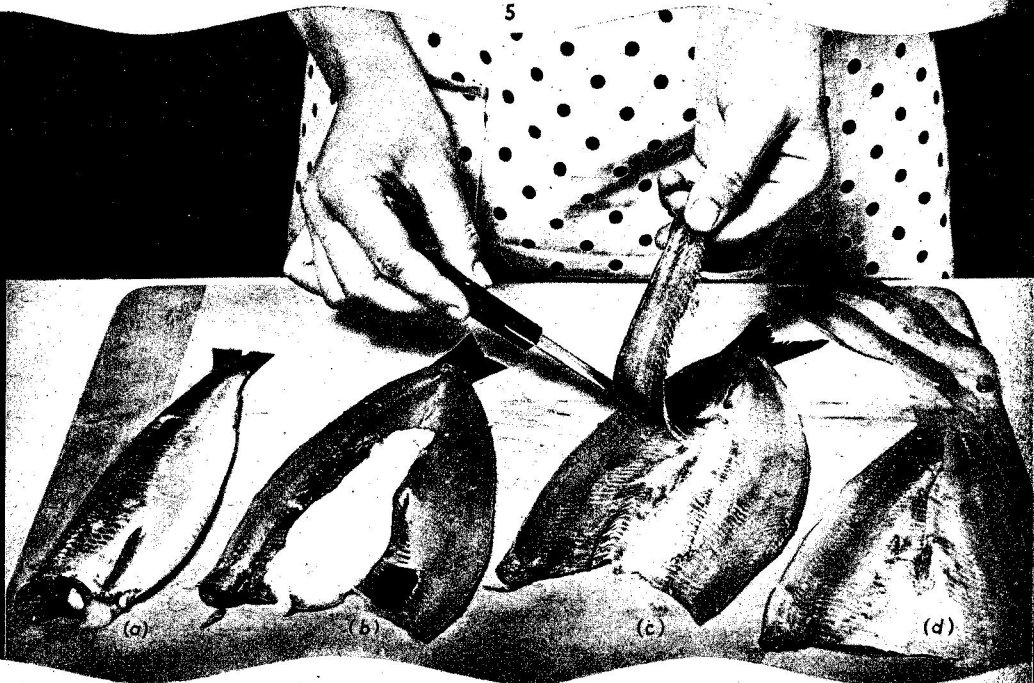
## How to Scale.

Have a bowl with cold water, and wet a handy little kitchen knife. Start from the tail end to push the blade *against* the scales, lifting them away from the fish until the head is reached; then do the other side. Hold the herring firmly during the process and when done rinse in cold water.

## How to Bone.

*Method 1.*—If you have a sharp knife, cut off head and tail and scale the fish. Be especially careful to remove all scales along the backbone. Now make a shallow cut along the backbone, beginning at the head end. With finger and thumb open the fish and lift up the bone with the knife. After a little practice you will be able to remove most of the small bones with the backbone.

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Preparing a Herring : (a) Beheaded ; (b) Opened ; (c) Boning ; (d) Ready for Use.

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*Method 2.*—If you do not possess a sharp knife, use a pair of kitchen scissors. Cut off head and tail and cut open along the belly. Open out the fish, lay inside down on a board and press along the backbone with your thumb. This loosens the bone. Turn the fish over and lift out the bone. Here again, you will find the small bones come away too, if you are careful.

It's a proud moment when you can handle and prepare herrings like a professional, because then you can be quite independent, and with the fillets you can ring the changes on all sorts of delicious dishes.

When the roes are removed, handle them as little as possible. Put them on a plate, dividing the hard from the soft. They can be cooked and served with the herrings, or, if you prefer, will make a dish by themselves.

Again, some people complain of the smell when cooking herrings. But it's quite easy to minimise that. Try baking them in the oven in a covered dish and you will find there is no smell at all. If it's not oven day with you, put the herrings into a buttered casserole and cook them on the top of the stove, or over a very low gas jet. Even cheap casseroles, costing less than 1s. each, if gradually heated through, are soon accustomed to this kind of use, and if you keep the lid on, there will be practically no smell.

What about the pan, the knives and forks? Just make a practice of wiping them first with a twist of soft paper, then rinsing them through *cold* water. You know, don't you, that hot water "sets" the smell? If you pour *cold* water into the frying pan, and slip in a lump of soda and let the water come to the boil, the last trace of fish cooking will disappear.

If a little mustard is put in the washing up water for fishy dishes, the smell is lessened at once, and all taste of fish disappears. Mustard will also take away any smell of fish from your hands.

Get into the habit of saving soft clean tissue paper, for if you fold it into a wrinkled pad it is just right for laying fried fish on to drain for a moment.

Keep a pair of clean scissors hanging in your kitchen for trimming off heads, tails and fins or cutting the fish. If the blades get tired, take a bottle with a small neck and make a few vicious stabs at it with the scissors as if you were intending to cut the bottle neck in two. The blades will be sharp again in a minute.

## DOUGHT HERRINGS TO HAVE ROES?

Some people think that unless a herring has a roe it's not in prime condition; that is not a fact. The roe or spawn is found in adult fish during the period immediately before the breeding season. But there are always millions of plump and tender young herrings that are not yet old enough to have roes at all.

