



## cooking class



# down to debone

Let **Dan Rand** (8 years of service), Purchasing Team Leader at the Whole Foods Market Seafood Processing Facility at Pigeon Cove in Gloucester, Massachusetts, help you tackle this task

BY CHERYL FENTON PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL PIAZZA

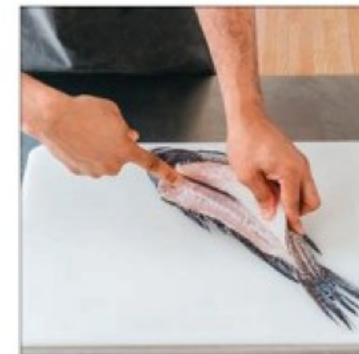
Before you start, Rand suggests, ask your fishmonger to remove the scales for you, since that can turn messy.



**1.** Rinse and pat the fish dry. Place it on a cutting board with its back toward you, the fish head toward the left of the cutting board. Position your knife under the pectoral fin and cut halfway through the flesh at a 45-degree angle toward the head.



**2.** Place your free hand on the top of the fish to steady it. With your knife blade parallel to the board, cut from tail to head with the blade skimming the top of the rib cage at a depth of about 2 inches. Remove your knife when you reach the head.



**3.** Beginning halfway up, insert the knife tip along the top of the rib cage, making sweeping slices away from you and lifting the fillet as you go. As you cut, you're separating flesh from bone.



**4.** When you get to the head, lift fillet and reverse cuts toward tail until you have sliced off fillet in one piece. Flip fish over and repeat steps one through four on the other side. Parallel cuts start near tail; travel toward head.



**5.** With salmon, use needle-nose pliers to extract pin bones along spine. With other fish, run hand along fillet to feel where bones begin. Ride knife tip along row of bones, cutting to board on one side of backbone, then back along other side. Remove set of bones in one piece, using a sanitized tool.



**6.** To remove skin, place the fillet skin-side down on the cutting board. Hold the tail and place your knife at the end between skin and flesh. Run the knife slowly along the fillet with the blade pointed at a slight downward angle, wiggling it as you move, until you reach the other end of the fillet.

FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS; PROP STYLIST: PAIGE HICKS

Serving a whole fish makes a dramatic presentation. Learn how to remove the bones like a pro.