

# Monchong



## Sickle Pomfret • mukau *Taractichthys steindachneri*

### LIFE HISTORY INFORMATION AND HAWAII STATE RECORD

Size - ~30 in and ~30 lbs. • The oldest known was ~8 yrs. • Spawn in the spring (March-May).

HAWAII STATE RECORD: 23 lbs 6 oz by Mark Vierra

### FISHERY INFORMATION

Commonly caught in the deep-set longline commercial fishery (non-target species) and using bottomfish deepwater handline gear with power reels. Harvested at depths >150-250 fathoms. Catches typically peak in spring.

### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Monchong was once seen as a bycatch species and is now popular in restaurants, especially for sushi.

### CURRENT REGULATIONS

FEDERAL: Monitored, but no annual catch limit

### COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

**Currently monitored as a pelagic management unit species.**

### STOCK STATUS

Not overfished; not experiencing overfishing





# Monchong Pomodoro

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE POMODORO SAUCE:

9 cup crushed tomatoes  
(with basil leaf, if possible)  
or 3 pounds very ripe heirloom  
tomatoes, peeled, seeded  
and dice  
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 clove garlic  
1 tsp sea salt  
freshly ground black pepper (*Tellicherry*,  
if you've got it)  
half a bunch torn fresh basil  
or 1 tbsp dried, well-ground with a  
mortar and pestle

### FOR THE FISH:

4 pieces monchong (3-4 oz each)  
salt and pepper to taste  
cornstarch  
2 tbsp light olive or canola oil  
minced or snipped flat-leaf parsley

## DIRECTIONS

### MAKE THE SAUCE:

1. Prepare the tomatoes if you're using fresh.
2. In a large, heavy pan such as a Dutch oven, coat the bottom with the olive oil.
3. Peel the garlic, cut into three pieces and place in pan with olive oil. Simmer over a low flame until the garlic is golden (*but DO NOT let it burn*). Press the garlic with the back of a wooden spoon to release its fragrant esters, and swish the garlic around in the oil. Then fish out the garlic and discard it.
4. Add the tomatoes to the pan all in one swift movement (*if you slowly pour, the juices may spit and splatter*). Add the salt, pepper and basil. Cook on low, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes or so; then raise the heat to medium and let the sauce cook without bubbling until the water has evaporated and the sauce is kind of jammy. Taste and correct seasonings.

### PREPARE THE FISH:

1. Sprinkle monchong with salt and pepper to taste. Dredge in cornstarch until coated.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat (*hot but not smoking*). Fry the monchong until golden brown on both sides; turn only once.
3. Serve topped with a goodly dollop of pomodoro.  
Or place in a pool of the sauce, if preferred.  
Scatter minced or snipped flat-leaf parsley over all.



*Recipe and Photo Courtesy  
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