

Whiting

Although small in size, Whiting are one of the more popular saltwater surf species in the south, mainly because these fish can be easily caught from piers and bridges using light tackle. This means if you already have fresh water fishing gear, a trip to catch Whiting is less expensive than say, re-configuring for an off shore trip.

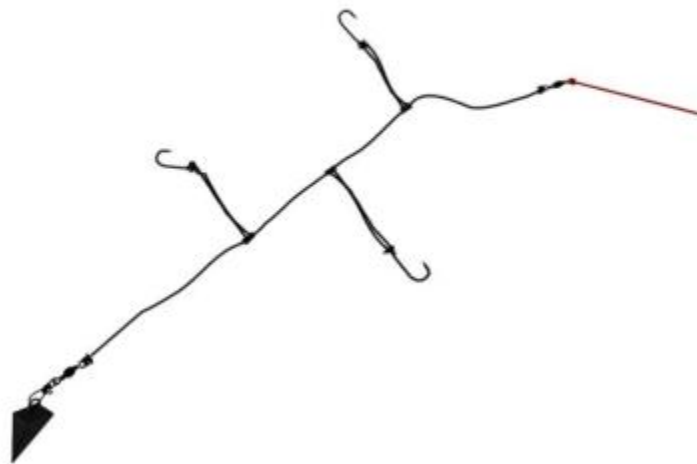
As water temperatures drop in the cooler months, many fish species slow their feeding habits. Whiting, however, bite well in the cooler early months of Spring, so instead of hanging around the house on those warm early Spring days take a trip to the beach and catch some Whiting.



Whiting are often listed in fishing identification books as the Gulf Kingfish and the Southern Kingfish. Whiting range from the Carolinas

down and around through the Gulf Coast in shallow coastal waters. Whiting generally average around a pound and are scrappy fighters on light tackle. These fish search the sandy bottom for sand fleas, shrimp, and smaller prey fish. They have a small mouth making the use of a small hook essential. Generally, a hook no larger than a #1 is needed, tipped with an equally small piece of bait. A small piece of shrimp that has had the shell removed works very well.

When fishing from a pier or out of a boat, rig your tackle to [fish on the bottom](#) and use just enough weight to keep the bait on the bottom. If possible, fish so the current is flowing away from your position. This will help keep the line tight but remember the bait must be resting near the bottom to catch Whiting. Also, it is a good idea to use a light leader line. Slide an egg sinker onto the reel's main line then tie the leader to the reel's line with a [swivel](#) to prevent the line from twisting. Tie the hook directly to the other end of the leader line. Do not use a snap swivel at the hook, that will result in fewer bites.



You may choose to use a multi-hook rig, especially if you are fishing in the surf. The multi-hook rig which are anchored at the bottom by a pyramid weight seem to work best. When fishing on the beach in the surf, set 2 or 3 rods out at a time. Purchase a ten foot long 3 inch diameter PVC pipe and cut the pipe into 1/3 sections. These sections can be vertically pushed into the sand and used as rod holders. Once again use a small #1 hook and a small shelled piece of fresh shrimp or sand fleas. This should provide enough action to keep you busy. If no Whiting are being caught within a hour try another section of beach. Look for areas where [tidal flow](#) has created out washes. This helps to stir up the food Whiting are looking for. Usually if other fishermen are set up along a section of beach that is a good sign fish are being caught.

Whiting have a soft body and are easy to clean. Use a spoon to scrape the scales, remove the head and gut. Wash, batter in your favorite fish meal and fry in cooking oil heated to around 350 degrees (this method is similar to that used to make southern fried catfish). Whiting can also be filleted if preferred. Whiting are an excellent pan fish.