

# Lionfish

*Pterois volitans*



- Region of Origin:** The South Pacific and Indian Oceans (i.e., the Indo-Pacific region).
- Habitat:** Lionfish are found in almost all marine habitat types found in warm marine waters of the tropics.
- Current Range:** Indo-Pacific region, Atlantic Ocean's Southeastern US coastline, the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.
- Life Span:** 6 Years in the Wild

People have been dumping lionfish into the Atlantic for 25 years, and these voracious invaders are also abundant in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Since lionfish are not native to Atlantic waters, they have very few predators. They feed on native reef life such as small crustaceans and fish, including important commercial fish species such as snapper and grouper. Divers hunt them, conservation organizations host fishing competitions, and lobster fishermen trap them. But we can all help lessen their impact by eating them! They are delicious. Lionfish have a buttery mild flavor, and most flaky meat that allows these Omega-3 rich fish to be prepared in many exciting ways to please any palate.

## Castaway's Wreck-Diver Style Lionfish

*Recipe by Castaway Waterfront Restaurant and Sushi Bar*

Courtesy of Castaway Waterfront Restaurant and Sushi Bar in Marathon Key, Florida, and posted by Erin Spencer in her article: Lionfish: Gotta Eat 'Em to Beat 'Em, published in Explorers Journal, National Geographic, July 10, 2013.

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 42 oz Lionfish Fillets, patted dry | 5 tsp Capers                        |
| ? cups Flour (for coating)         | ½ cup White Wine                    |
| 5 ea Garlic Cloves, diced          | ¼ cup Lemon Juice, fresh squeezed   |
| 2 ½ cups Tomatoes, chopped         | Garnish: Parsley, Kale, Lemon Wedge |

- Dredge fillets in flour to lightly dust.
- Place in sauté pan with small amount of hot butter over medium heat.
- Cook first side, careful not to burn.
- Turn over fish when golden, and reduce heat while adding garlic, tomatoes, capers, white wine and lemon juice.
- Cover to hold steam in and cook until fish is fork-tender.
- Add basil and serve immediately.
- Garnish with sprig of parsley or kale and lemon wedge.



*Castaway's Wreck-Diver style lionfish- a personal favorite of Erin Spencer; photo copyrighted and courtesy of Erin Spencer.*