

## Better Homemade Carp Baits - Easy Flavour and Taste Choices

Flavours are one of the favourite topics of discussion among carp anglers. But some are many times more effective and have literally caught millions more carp than others!

Many flavours general effectiveness on different waters differs over the season and in which bait they are used. Probably the biggest variable in using flavours is the best level to use in a bait or bait soak or dip mixture.

Flavours are often used conventionally as a 'label' to differentiate your bait from others, perhaps even on a similar base mix. The orthodox thinking of most anglers on 'the bank' is that flavours effect your bait pretty much solely by making it smell good Perhaps in a fruity, fishy, sweet or other appetising way. True, flavours can do this and at least this is how we as humans experience many flavours.

Many of the flavours which have stood the test of time in an increasingly competitive carp fishing market are (or contain) feeding triggers of extraordinary impact on carp senses, often internal and external; big-time! They can often stimulate a search locate and feed response from various ranges in the water and impact on multiple carp senses and responses simultaneously.

My personal opinion is that this is the whole point of a bait anyway...

Most flavours can catch carp very effectively even if only for limited periods when used directly as a neat soak. Although the very much less water soluble propylene glycol flavours have been very much used in the UK, being a cheaper alternative, their use is now far less prevalent.

In the States and many parts of the world, propylene flavours and those supermarket cooking flavours based on acetic acid are used by the majority of anglers to good effect still. However, the fully water soluble alcohol and glycerol flavour, for example are much more popular in the UK for pressured carp water fishing.

Many Americans will mention the still popular 'supermarket flavours' as part of their homemade bait recipes. This goes for even those fishing competitively in pay lake tournaments; although many are learning there are much superior options available.

Almost invariably the 2 most commonly used cheap supermarket flavours seem to be

Strawberry and vanilla, but chocolate and coffee are also popular along with other fruity ones. It might be a surprise that many Americans use 'Cola' or 'Red Bull' or 'Cream Soda,' or 'Cool Aid' to flavour carp baits in dough or boilie baits.

Flavours are most often complex combinations of quite volatile ingredients. Anglers have been able to achieve good results on many such alternatives from 'Slush Puppy' flavour, milk shakes, ice cream flavours and melted ice cream. I think at the last count the 'MacDonald's' strawberry flavour formula had approaching 30 different components.

Everyday drinks make ideal flavours for many wide and deeply scientific reasons. From 'vodka', 'Tia Maria', whiskey, brand, liquors, condensed milk, coconut milk, in fact many nut and seed milks, like sesame seed 'Tahini'. Yeast extract and peanut butter blend with other ingredients and make great flavours; these 2 examples will enhance your bait's taste and 'palatability' effects too.

In solution, kelp and seaweeds powders for example, add taste enhancing factors and very carp attractive minerals and certain important vitamins. There are many sugary concentrates that carp love and sugar extracts from various industrial processes and by-products. Adding these gives a very attractive 'difference' to using simply straight liquid flavours.

For example, malt extract maltose, lactose, and fructose. Liquorice extract is another very sweet alternative if you are trying to avoid the usual use of the more commonly used sweeteners from fishing bait suppliers and supermarket ones like sodium saccharin, 'Splenda' and the like.

The fact is that some of most effective additives to sweeten your bait are the 2 extremely sweet natural proteins available from bait suppliers; namely 'Talin' and 'Thaumatococcus' If all you use presently is a

supermarket flavour like vanilla, and are just adding molasses, honey, black treacle or brown sugar, then using one of these super sweeteners will make a big difference to results.

Real extracts in solution work very well giving off fine particles off the bait along with dissolved compounds, flavours and so on. Vanilla extract, blue cheese powder, anchovy extract, garlic powder, chilli powder, spirulina powder, 'Robin Red' type products and kelp powder are good examples of what I'd term as 'innate' bait flavourings.

There are numerous tastes to exploit in flavours and one not mentioned in angling circles is that Japanese originating one called 'unami'. This is a unique taste which will give quite an edge in some competitive fishing situations and is worth exploiting.

As for the usual sweet, savoury, salty, fishy, spicy, meaty and bitter type tastes most of us are familiar with I have noticed an important trend. It seems that if a bait has milk type ingredients or fishy ingredients for example, then the flavour added by the average angler might well reflect the perceived characteristic of those ingredients.

A milk powder based bait would usually have a milky, creamy, sweet or fruity flavour. A fish and shellfish based bait might get flavours like crab, lobster, salmon etc, although fruit flavours are often used and compliment the acid nature of these protein type baits. It does pay to experiment and use flavours that are not normally thought of as used in that type of bait.

Combinations of flavours have always been a good 'edge'; whenever the 'dominantly successful' single flavour on a water is losing its effectiveness. For example, adding another flavour to 'Scopex' or 'Tutti Frutti' can produce good results. Care needs to be taken not to over-do flavours most especially in hard pressured waters where carp may be very wary of strongly flavoured baits of particular types.

The flavours from bait companies have mostly been evolved from decades of use and testing in fishing situations and these are best used as the basis of your flavour combination if you are new to the practice of making your bait as unique and different to the 'norm' as possible. The author has many more fishing and bait edges available and every single one can have a huge impact on your catches...

By Tim Richardson.

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