Q&A: What would you eat off a plate with a big fish right in the middle of it? Anything you like, though tasty foods made from fish would have been a popular choice. (Does your Mom or Dad cook fish for you to eat? What kinds of fish do they cook?) It is a bit hard to be sure what kind of fish is shown here, but it may be a bream, which lives in fresh or salt water.

Learn more: This brightly-colored Chinese porcelain plate is from a set ordered in 1879 by Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, during their two-year round-the-world tour. (Grant had just completed his second term as President of the United States of America.) The Grants ordered the “Fish Service” when they visited Hong Kong, and they asked for the set to include twenty-four plates and two serving dishes with fitted strainers. Strainer-dishes were used when serving fish; the juices dripped through the holes of the strainer, and were caught in platter, below. Although the fish on this plate may copy a French porcelain design, the plate’s border is purely Chinese in style. Visit our online collections.

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For more family entertainment ideas, see Winterthur’s At-Home Activities!