

A Salmon Shopper's Guide

Confused about salmon?



Are wild salmon abundant enough that we can enjoy eating them? What are the risks of salmon farming to the marine environment and to our health? Is salmon really a brain food and how can I choose what kind to eat?

Here are some answers.

There are two choices of salmon: **wild** and **farmed**, and they are very different.

Wild salmon (which today means only Pacific salmon, as no Atlantic salmon are caught commercially) are harvested in closely regulated commercial fisheries from California to Alaska. Alaskan salmon are especially bountiful and the fishery has been certified as "sustainable" by the Marine

Many wild salmon are flash frozen immediately after harvest as whole fish, fillets and steaks for discerning chefs and knowledgeable consumers to enjoy year round. Wild salmon in cans and pouches are versatile and widely available and smoked wild salmon is delicious.

Stewardship Council (MSC). Other salmon fisheries are undergoing evaluation for certification. Consumers can be confident that wild Pacific and Alaskan salmon from seafood markets, restaurants and direct sales are caught responsibly in sustainably managed fisheries.

Doctors, nutritionists, health-conscious and educated consumers recognize that wild salmon contain the long-chain Omega-3 fatty acids—EPA and DHA. These lower risks of heart disease and strokes, enhance brain development and function and reduce development of many other conditions such as arthritis, psoriasis, diabetes, macular degeneration (which may lead to blindness) and depression.

Species

There are several species of wild salmon, each with its own distinct flavor and appearance. They are like fine wines, appreciated for their character and regional uniqueness.

- ▶ **King or Chinook** is the largest wild salmon and weighs from five to 80 pounds. Kings have small black spots on their backs, dorsal and tail fins, and the inside of their lower jaw is black. Kings have red, pink, marbled or ivory flesh that contains high amounts of health-enhancing Omega-3 oils.
- ▶ **Coho or Silvers** are eight to 20 pounds with small black spots on their backs and upper lobe of the tail fin and white gums. Coho have orange-red flesh

with firm texture and are prized for their excellent appearance and flavor.

- ▶ **Sockeye or Red** are known for their beautiful deep crimson color that is retained after cooking and high Omega-3 oil content. Sockeye salmon have dark bluish-green backs and bright silver sides. They average five to six pounds and have long been preferred by quality conscious Japanese consumers and knowledgeable chefs and restaurateurs.
- ▶ **Chum or Keta** weigh seven to 12 pounds and are lighter flavored, abundant and affordable. They are excellent sources of low-fat protein and their durable texture holds up well in patties, fish dishes and for smoking.

- ▶ **Pink or Humpy** are also abundant and are the smallest wild salmon, weighing an average of three to four pounds. They have light pink flesh, mild

flavor, are often canned and, like chum salmon, represent especially good value.

- ▶ **Atlantic or farmed salmon** are produced in floating factory farms in Maine and Washington state waters, and are imported from Chile, Canada, Scotland and Norway. Wild Atlantic salmon are rarely harvested and now need particular protection from invasions of escaped farmed fish.

Farmed salmon require additions of artificial colorants or their flesh would be an unappetizing grey. Recent scientific studies of farmed salmon raise concerns about levels of contaminants such as PCBs and dioxin that pose health risks, particularly to pregnant women and children.

Genetic Engineering

Atlantic salmon may become the first genetically engineered animal available for human consumption if the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves a petition presently before it. Public pressure needs to be brought now to stop this.

Labeling

Consumers are entitled to accurate labeling of food so they can make informed decisions. Insist on labels that tell country of origin and whether the fish is farmed or wild. Stores must also comply with FDA regulations that label farmed salmon as containing artificial, added colors.

For your health and the health of the marine environment, Go Wild. ●

For more information

For more information on risks of feedlot salmon farming and genetically engineered salmon, go to:

- ▶ ussalmonnetwork.org
- ▶ iatp.org/fish
- ▶ farmedanddangerous.org
- ▶ gefisht.org

Want more information about how to chose sustainably harvested fish? Go to the Seafood Choices Alliance page at

- ▶ seafoodchoices.org
- ▶ msc.org
- ▶ or call our toll-free hotline at (877) 565-1287

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