



# The Ultimate Guide to Buying Seafood

Buying seafood doesn't need to be complicated. Utilize this guide to find the perfect seafood to satisfy your taste, schedule, budget and diet.

## I'M IN THE MOOD FOR:

- **For a light, delicate fish.** Choose a lean fish, such as barramundi, sea bass, cod, flounder, grouper, haddock, halibut, mahi mahi, perch, pollock, red snapper, rockfish, sole or yellowfin tuna. For shellfish, shrimp is light and lean.
- **For a richer taste.** Choose a fattier fish usually with darker flesh, such as herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, swordfish, trout or albacore tuna. Several shellfish varieties fit in this rich category and offer delicious briny flavor, such as clams, mussels and oysters.

## TO COOK MY SEAFOOD, I'D LIKE TO:

- **Use my outdoor grill:** Many fish stand up to the heat, and it can bring out a delicious smoky flavor. Pick a variety that is firmer in texture, such as catfish, mahi mahi, salmon, scallops, shrimp, snapper, swordfish or tuna.
- **Steam or poach it:** Try lean fish – mild-flavored with tender, white or pale flesh – such as sea bass, cod, flounder, grouper, haddock, halibut or pollock.
- **Broil or bake:** Try a medium-fat fish, such as bluefish, catfish, salmon or swordfish.
- **Eat it without having to cook it:** Choose a precooked fish that's frozen (so you just have to warm it up), or opt for canned tuna, salmon, sardines or crab.

## TIP **Let availability and freshness be your guides.**

It's easy to substitute one fish for another in a recipe, so if the mahi mahi looks and smells fresher than the pompano, buy it instead. Also, keep in mind the frozen and canned sections offer the same health benefits and often a wider variety to choose from.

## AT THE STORE, WHAT TO DO:

Find a grocery store, box store, or butcher shop you trust. Most major chains have their seafood sourcing policies on their website, and the smaller stores can often provide their sourcing guidelines if you ask. Making healthy, sustainable choices is easier than it has ever been as a good grocer will do the research for you.

If you want to know more about what you're buying, ask the staff in the seafood department. They're there to help you!

### What to ask at the seafood counter

- How long has it been on display? Or, when did you get this in?
- Is there a 3rd-party certification?
- Where is the seafood from?

If you're looking for more information about sustainability, digital guides such as NOAA Fisheries' FishWatch offers information about many U.S.-produced species.

## ACROSS THE STORE

**FRESH:** A great option if you're planning to eat fish today or tomorrow. Seafood should be consumed within one to two days when it's fresh or thawed. If you're eating it right away, prepared seafood is a quick and easy option, as well. Swing by the sushi station or prepared foods section for a meal on the run.



- **For the wallet:** Seasonal or local fresh options tend to be more budget-friendly at your fish counter. Both farm-raised and wild fish are good nutritional choices, so talk to your seafood counter expert about best deals, what's freshest and recipe ideas.
- **Look for:** Firm and moist flesh with shiny skin, if skin is on. The flesh should bounce back when poked. It should smell like the ocean, not "fishy."
- **Note:** If you find a deal or bulk package of fresh fish, you can freeze fillets for up to six months. If a fish was previously frozen and thawed, sometimes sold as "refreshed," you should not refreeze it.

**FROZEN:** If you plan to save your seafood for a later date, this is the way to go. It's also great for fast family-friendly meals such as pre-seasoned fish that can be cooked quickly in the oven or even microwave.



Frozen seafood is just as good for you, with most fish flash-frozen within hours of harvest, preserving peak flavor and texture until you are ready to cook.

- **For the wallet:** Frozen seafood is often a budget-friendly option, especially if you can buy larger packages and store them. Check for sales and coupons for even better values.
- **Look for:** Individually vacuum-packed pieces when possible, and avoid ice formed on the fish.

**CANNED, TINNED OR POUCHED:** There are many canned seafood options for a quick and easy meal or snack, and they serve as a great source of protein.

- **For the wallet:** Canned seafood is often the most budget-friendly option. Keep an eye out for sales and stock up on this shelf-stable pantry protein.



## Sustainable Fish: Better for You & the Planet

By choosing sustainable, responsibly farmed and wild-caught fish, you can help restore the health of our oceans and ensure more food for everyone.

- Sustainable means seafood has been caught or farmed in ways that conserve fish stocks and the ecosystems that support them.
- **The majority of U.S. retailers have sustainability sourcing policies in place.** Always buy seafood from a reputable market where the employees are able to answer your questions.
- You can also visit [FishWatch.gov](http://FishWatch.gov) or download the Seafood Watch app from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, both of which list sustainable seafood choices based on where the fish is from, how it was caught and additional factors.

Remember, it's not wild versus farmed, it's responsible versus not.

**Sustainable seafood means that wild-caught seafood comes from a well-managed fishery and farmed seafood comes from a farm following responsible practices.**

- Both farmed and wild seafood are safe to eat.
- Farming fish, shellfish, and seaweed is vital for supporting seafood production, year-round jobs, and rebuilding threatened and endangered species and habitats.
- In the U.S., the most common farmed species include oysters, clams, mussels, and shrimp, and fish such as catfish, trout, salmon and sea bass.
- When it comes to the environment, both farmed and wild fish and shellfish can be harvested responsibly, or not, so it is best to find out the sustainability policy of your grocer or look for a trusted certification on the package.