Alaska, Naturally

Alaska Salmon Menu & Marketing Guide
There is one place in the world where the waters are still pristine and rich with the bounty of natural salmon: Alaska! Home to the greatest wild salmon runs in the world, Alaska produces over 90% of the total North American commercial landings of natural salmon. Five unique and delicious species – Alaska King, Sockeye, Chum, Coho and Pink Salmon swim through the icy, pure waters of the North Pacific to mature into far and away the world's finest salmon.
The Lifecycle Of Alaska Salmon

Alaska Salmon spawn in over 2,000 freshwater rivers and lakes across the state. From there they migrate to the ocean, swimming thousands of miles through the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska, feeding on ocean krill, shrimp and other small fish. This natural diet, combined with the rigors of swimming through icy waters, gives Alaska Salmon their unique flavor, color and superior texture.

Although the lifecycle and spawning characteristics of each of the five species of Alaska Salmon differ, each maintains the same timing year after year, returning to the exact place of their birth. As the salmon return to spawn, they build up reserves of fat and nutrients to carry them through their rigorous journey upstream. It is at this point of peak quality, just before they reach fresh water, that the salmon are harvested.

Commitment To The Highest Quality Standards

To ensure the highest quality possible, Alaska fishermen work very quickly and carefully to ensure that Alaska Salmon is processed at the peak of freshness. Out on the open waters, Alaska Salmon are transferred from the fishing vessel to a tender, where trained crews move the salmon into iced holds and transport them to nearby processing plants. Whether transported via tender or delivered directly by the fishing vessel, all Alaska Salmon are delivered to the processing plan where they are processed into fresh, fresh-frozen and/or canned products within hours of harvesting.

Consistent And Abundant Supply

Despite reports of declining fishery resources across the nation and in other parts of the world, Alaska’s salmon supply has remained strong. Stringent management programs have resulted in record salmon harvests over the last 3-4 years. Foodservice operators can be assured that Alaska will produce a consistent and abundant supply of salmon for many years to come.
The following guide to the five species of Alaska Salmon details the distinct characteristics of each species and will help you decide which varieties best fit your price and performance needs.

Flavor At Its Finest
The flavor of Alaska Salmon depends upon its fat content and the environment in which it matured. Alaska’s icy, pure waters and the abundance of natural food the waters contain give Alaska Salmon unparalleled flavor. The fat content of salmon depends not only on the genetic make-up of each species, but also on its spawning cycle. The longer and more vigorous the freshwater trip, the more fat the fish will carry as it leaves the ocean.

Remember, Alaska Salmon is one of the healthiest seafood items you can menu. The fats present in Alaska Salmon are predominantly unsaturated, healthy fats, which studies indicate may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. (See the nutritional chart on page 7 for exact fat counts for each species.)

King or Chinook
In terms of size, flavor, texture and color, Alaska King Salmon deserves its royal status and superior menu price. These magnificent fish are prized for their flesh color, high oil content, firm texture and succulent flesh. King Salmon are most often served in upscale, white tablecloth restaurants. Alaska King Salmon are graded headless and dressed at 4/7 lbs., 7/11 lbs., 11/18 lbs., and 18 lbs. and up. They are generally marketed in whole, steak or fillet forms.

Sockeye or Red
The second most abundant species of Alaska Salmon is Red Sockeye Salmon, named for its distinctive deep red flesh color. The color of Sockeye Salmon meat is retained throughout the cooking process, bringing dramatic impact to any presentation. Much of Alaska’s Sockeye harvest has traditionally been sold to the Japanese, often regarded as the most sophisticated seafood eaters in the world. However, an ever-increasing percentage of the catch now remains in the U.S., as the domestic market discovers the superior attributes of Alaska Sockeye Salmon. Like King Salmon, the levels of polyunsaturated oils in Sockeye Salmon give it a succulent texture and rich flavor. Sockeye are graded headed and dressed at 3/5 lbs.
and 5/8 lbs. Alaska Sockeye Salmon are marketed as whole fish, steaks, fillets and canned.

Coho or Silver
One of the overall best eating salmon, Silvers are distinguished by their orange-red flesh, firm texture and delicate flavor. Alaska Silver Salmon should not be confused with “Silver-Brite” Chums, a grading term used to describe the skin color of ocean-caught Alaska Chum Salmon, an entirely different species. Alaska Silver Salmon are graded headed and dressed at 2/4 lbs., 4/6 lbs., 6/9 lbs. and 9/12 lbs. Silvers are most often marketed as whole fish, steaks and fillets.

Chum or Keta
Chums are popular in nearly every foodservice segment because they combine economy, excellent texture, attractive orange-pink meat color and delicate flavor. Alaska Chum Salmon have the meatiest, firmest texture of all of the five species of Alaska Salmon. Graded headed and dressed at 2/4 lbs., 4/6 lbs., 6/9 lbs. and 9 lbs. and up, Chums are harvested from July through October at the end of the Alaska Salmon season. They are available as whole fish, steaks and fillets. Chum Salmon have a lower oil content than other salmon and are very good for smoking. Lower oil content means extra care, and lower cooking temperatures are needed for Chum Salmon after initial high heat searing to prevent overcooking.

Pink
The smallest and most abundant of the Alaska Salmon species, Pinks are distinguished by their light, rosy pink-colored flesh, tender texture and delicate flavor. Due to their abundant supply, Pinks are becoming increasingly popular as a small, economical salmon for a variety of menu applications, from whole grilled to pastas, seafood salads and chowders. Because of their low to moderate oil content, take care not to overcook Pink Salmon – treat them much as you would a trout. Alaska Pink Salmon are graded headed and dressed at 2/5 lbs., 3/5 lbs., 5 lbs. and up. Alaska Pink Salmon are marketed whole as whole sides, canned and smoked.
It's not surprising that the largest commercial fishing industry in the country is also the leader in seafood innovation. Alaska has developed state-of-the-art freezing and processing technology as a superior method of preserving the quality of Alaska Salmon as soon as it leaves the water. Harvested at the peak of freshness, Alaska Salmon is quick-chilled, carefully processed and rapidly frozen to ensure that its unique flavor, flesh color and texture are preserved for year-round dining pleasure. You can serve fresh-frozen salmon from Alaska with pride, knowing that it meets your customers’ highest expectations. It is important to note that when you apply the word fresh to seafood, it doesn’t necessarily mean the fish was harvested recently or is of top quality. It could mean that it’s been out of the water for up to 20 days! Seafood quality cannot be improved once the fish leaves the water, it can only be maintained, and Alaska’s industry experts go to every effort to deliver only the highest quality product. That quality is locked in — “suspended in time”, if you will — using flash-freezing technology.

Here are a few other facts you should know about fresh-frozen Alaska Salmon:
- According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the average person can not distinguish truly fresh fish from fish that is rapidly frozen and properly prepared.
- The majority of chefs and consumers prefer the distinctive flavor of Alaska’s wild salmon regardless of whether it’s been frozen.
- Fresh-frozen Alaska Salmon retains all the flavor and nutrition of fresh salmon.
- Fresh-frozen Alaska Salmon is available year-round and offers the best value for the money.
- Fresh-frozen Alaska Salmon is reliably consistent in form and weight, and is available in any cut you wish.

### Product Cuts

Alaska Salmon is available in several product forms: whole dressed (headed and gutted) roasts, whole sides, steaks and fillet portions. Sides and individual portions are available in cryovac packaging. Alaska Sockeye and Pink Salmon are available canned.

### Nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Sockeye</th>
<th>Coho</th>
<th>Chum</th>
<th>Pink</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories (kcal)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein (g)</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Fat (g)</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cholesterol (mg)</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>55</td>
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</table>

NOTE: Nutritional values for salmon will vary 1-2% in protein and fat content from these average values, depending upon the maturity of the fish.

Natural Alaska Salmon is an excellent source of high quality protein.
Receiving
Inspect your order of Alaska Salmon immediately upon delivery. Boxes with water marks may indicate that the product has been allowed to partially thaw during transit. Open at least one carton per shipment and check the core product temperature using an instant-read thermometer if possible. Fresh fish should be delivered at 30-38°F and frozen fish at 0-10°F. If the temperature does not meet shipping specifications, notify both the carrier and supplier immediately.

Next, check net weights of the glazed product. If you are not sure how to do this, please call or write our ASMI quality assurance program.

Check the quality again after proper thawing. The skin should be moist and shiny with at least 80 percent of the scales intact. The flesh should be firm and springy, without noticeable separations or unattached bones. The only thing you should smell is the sea.

Storage
Move your Alaska Salmon shipment quickly into storage. Store whole, cleaned fresh or freshly thawed fish in a stainless steel pan with good drainage. Cover with a towel and pile ice on top of and around the fish. Store fresh fish at 32-35°F. Store frozen fish at -18 to -29°F. Stack frozen cartons away from walls and off the floor for better air circulation. Mark the date on each box as it enters the storage area and rotate product on a first-in, first-out basis.

Thawing
When you are ready to serve fresh-frozen Alaska Salmon, here are a few planning steps. Thawing has a profound effect on seafood quality, so plan ahead. Thaw frozen Alaska Salmon slowly to minimize drip loss and protect flavor, aroma and texture. Plan your seafood needs carefully to allow sufficient time for thawing.

For best results, quickly remove the desired salmon portion from the case shipment and immediately return the remaining product to cold storage. Thaw at 32-35°F. Place the product in drain pans or other containers to prevent the buildup of melt-water and drippings. Never let the temperature climb above 40°F and never thaw by immersing fish in warm water. Once the salmon is thawed keep it chilled until ready for use. Don’t refreeze.

Shiny skin and firm texture are natural characteristics of Alaska Salmon. From top to bottom: King, Coho, Chum Sockeye, and Pink.
With the highest fat content of the five species, Alaska King, Sockeye and Silver Salmon have a rich flavor and a moist, succulent texture. They are well-suited for all methods of cooking including grilling, boiling, sautéing, baking, poaching and steaming as well as smoking, lox and sashimi preparations. (For sashimi, make sure that the salmon was fresh-frozen at least one week prior to preparation.) Alaska Chum and Pink Salmon have leaner fat profiles, making them excellent choices for heart-healthy entrees. Both are good choices for sautéing and baking in flavorful sauces. Whole Alaska Pink Salmon make a dramatic presentation grilled.

To sear the salmon while sealing in the fish’s natural moisture, high heat is recommended for the initial cooking of all five species. However, you may want to reduce cooking temperatures after searing Chum and Pink Salmon, and be sure to watch them carefully to prevent overcooking. Remember, Alaska Salmon will continue to cook slightly after it is removed from the heat. Salmon is done when it looks slightly translucent in the center; it will cook through away from the heat and flake when done.
Menuing

Now that you have Alaska Salmon in your kitchen, make the most of it on your menu. Let all of your customers know you’ve chosen the world’s finest salmon.

Brand Your Menu With The “Alaska” Origin And Species Name

The very word “Alaska” conjures up images of icy clear waters, pristine landscapes and untouched inland rivers. Take the romance a step further and mention the species by name: Chinook, the “King” of salmon, Sockeye, with its bright red meat color, Coho, known for its superior texture, Chum, with its delicate flavor and meaty texture, and Pink, mild and delicate, like trout but so much more flavorful and attractive.

Highlight The Nutritional, Heart-Healthy Advantages

And for your health and diet-conscious customers, be sure to highlight the nutritional benefits of natural Alaska Salmon, particularly the Omega-3 unsaturated fats, which studies indicate may lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Merchandising Materials And Displays Enhance Sales

Alaska Salmon is one of those center-of-plate items that never goes out of style. In fact, once on the menu it is rarely dropped. Customers expect to see it there, and are constantly looking for new and delicious ways to enjoy it. Here are a few ideas to help create additional sales:

- Run seafood specials with a daily menu sheet or menu shells.
- Create themed events using colorful props and artwork.
- Add a dazzling seafood display to your dining room.
- Pass out samples in your waiting area or at the table as customers are seated.

Waitstaff Training

Your waitstaff is a key and final element in the sale of Alaska Salmon menu items. It is vital that they are trained and prepared to answer questions ranging from “Is it ‘fresh’?” and “Where is it caught?” to “How is it prepared and what does it taste like?”
Educate your waitstaff. Include this Alaska Salmon Menu and Marketing Guide as the first step in their instruction. Training videos and fact sheets are also available from the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. Your waitstaff should know about the five different Alaska Salmon species, their subtle flavor and meat color differences and the variety of available product cuts. They should also be able to answer questions about presence of bones, texture, preparation and taste.

Conduct a taste test of the salmon menu items and involve your staff. Sampling is the best way to prepare your waitstaff to sell the delicious flavor of your menu items.

Prepare your waitstaff to answer questions about fresh versus fresh-frozen. If customers ask if the salmon is fresh, here’s a quick and positive answer:
“We serve only the highest-quality Alaska Salmon. Our King and Sockeye Salmon were quick-chilled then flash-frozen hours after they were caught. Alaska’s advanced freezing technique “locks in” the delicious, fresh flavor of the salmon so that it tastes as if it just came out of the water. I’ve tried both dishes myself and they are superb!”

Encourage suggestive selling. Create incentive programs for your waitstaff to encourage sales of Alaska Salmon, such as awarding a gift certificate to the staff member who sells the most salmon dinners in one night.

Remind your staff to mention that Alaska Salmon is completely natural – swimming freely in the icy, pure waters of Alaska’s 34,000 mile of coastline. Considering the popularity of “free-range chicken,” “unpenned veal” and other naturally-raised meats, the benefits of natural Alaska Salmon will help keep your registers ringing.

Sourcing
You can order Alaska Salmon year-round. To receive a supplier’s guide and the new Alaska Seafood Buyer’s Guide featuring color photography of product forms, nutritional information, product specifications and information on how to maintain fresh and frozen product quality, simply write or call the office listed below.

Let Us Help You
Contact the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) for made-to-order promotional ideas, merchandising tools and educational materials that will strengthen your operation and improve your profitability. Write: ASMI
150 Nickerson Street
Suite 310
Seattle, WA 98109
Or call (800) 806-2497