

Alaska Salmon Quality Specifications and Grades - Fresh and Frozen

Quality Specifications

Grades

**Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
Recommended Statewide Quality Specifications
For Alaska Fresh and Frozen Wild Salmon**

Part I: Description

Section 1: Product Definition

Alaska Fresh or Frozen Wild Salmon is the food prepared from only the species of salmon listed in Section 2; these species may be sold fresh or frozen, and shall be reasonably protected from oxidation and/or dehydration.

Section 2: Species

The Species which can be designated Alaska Wild Salmon are:

Species	Common or Usual Name(s)
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Chinook, King
<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>	Red, Sockeye
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Coho, Cohoe, Silver
<i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>	Pink
<i>Oncorhynchus keta</i>	Keta, Chum

Section 3: Styles of Preparation

A. Dressed, Head-off: The belly of the salmon is split from the anus to approximately one inch before the throat (isthmus of the nape); the split may also continue through the throat. The viscera and kidney (backblood) are removed leaving the cavity free of blood and pieces of membrane. The head is removed leaving the nape cut free of gill. Water used during processing or rinsing shall be sanitized in accordance with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requirements, 18 AAC 34.080(c).

B. Dressed Head-on: The belly of the salmon is split from the anus to approximately one inch before the throat (isthmus of the nape); the split may also continue through the throat. The viscera and kidney (backblood) are removed leaving the cavity free of blood and pieces of membrane. The gills may be removed; the head and gill cover remain intact. Water used during processing or rinsing shall be sanitized in accordance with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requirements, 18 AAC 34.080(c).

C. Whole (Round) Fish: Water used during processing or rinsing shall be sanitized in accordance with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requirements, 18 AAC 34.080(c).

D. Other: As defined by a buyer/seller relationship. This category may include a variety of styles and cleaning/processing techniques depending upon the form in which the product is marketed. Water used during processing or rinsing shall be sanitized in accordance with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requirements, 18 AAC 34.080(c).

Part II: Recommended Quality Grades and Characteristics

Section 1: Quality Grades

Salmon are categorized in the following grades:

Premium Grade

Grade A

Grade B

Grade C

Section 2: Quality Characteristics

A. All salmon will exhibit the following characteristics in order to meet the **Premium Grade**.

1. HANDLING: All Premium fish will be bled and chilled upon harvest. There will be no skin or internal cuts or tears. There will be no punctures or bruises. Meat will be resilient when subjected to finger pressure. Scale loss will not exceed 15%. Scale adherence will be uniform. Some scale loss due to method of harvest handling can be expected.

2. ODOR: Odor will be sea-fresh. There will be no off-odor.

3. EYES: Eyes will be normal in appearance, bright and clear.

4. GILLS: Gills will be bright red, and will smell sea-fresh and odorless.

5. SKIN: Skin color will be characteristic of fresh fish that is typical of the species, sexual maturity, district of harvest, and time of year it was harvested. (Refer to ASMI Skin Color Evaluation Guide for Pacific Salmon). Skin will be bright, shiny, and not hold wrinkles when bending fish slightly. There will be no skin indentations, perforations or scars. Slime will be clear. There will be no tail damage or fin loss.

6. BELLY CAVITY: Color will be bright and natural. There will be no belly burn or protruding ribs. The belly will be free of viscera and the collar free of gill membrane.

7. MEAT COLOR: Meat color will be characteristic of fish that is typical of the species, district of harvest, and time of year

harvested. (Refer to ASMI Meat Color Guide for Wild Alaska Salmon).

8. PHYSICAL SHAPE: Physical shape will be characteristic of the species at its stage of sexual maturity.

Deviations from the above characteristics are cause to downgrade salmon from **Premium Grade**.

1. Grade A. Same as Premium Grade with the following exceptions: Bleeding will be optional. Scars may be present if less than 1 and well healed. There may be one skin cut less than 1. Scale loss will not exceed 25%. There may be up to 2 protruding ribs

2. Grade B. Same as Grade A with the following exceptions: Smell may be neutral. Eyes may be dull, but not milky or cloudy. There may be slight to moderate indentations, scars up to 1.5 in size, and one skin cut up to 1.5. Scale loss may not exceed 40%. There can be no tail damage and fin loss will not exceed 50%. There may be slight fading of belly lining natural color and slight discoloration. There may be slight belly burn with up to 6 protruding ribs. There may be internal cuts not to exceed 0.5 total. There may be no viscera, but traces of blood acceptable.

3. Grade C. Same as Grade B with the following exceptions: There may be slight odor, eyes milky or cloudy, and gills pink to buff. Slime may be dull and copious. Scars and punctures will be allowed. Cuts and scale loss may be more than Grade B. Tail damage may be present and fin loss may be more than Grade B. Belly cavity discoloration may be more than Grade B. Bruising belly burn, and cuts, may be more than Grade B. Viscera traces and blood more than Grade B.

B. Any, or a combination of the following defects are cause to downgrade a **frozen** salmon from Premium, depending upon the severity:

1. Improper handling: A salmon which has been frozen in a misshapen or severely deformed position or one which has experienced any tail damage. This does not apply to minor changes in the symmetry which may occur during freezing.
2. Natural defects and improper workmanship: Any of the defects listed in the fresh fish grading criteria which are determined, upon nondestructive examination, to exist in frozen fish.
3. Dehydration/freezer burn: A fish which has readily discernible dehydration present on the nape and/or in the belly cavity that is not adequately trimmed.
4. Scale loss: A salmon exhibiting over 15% scale loss, if other defective conditions are apparent.

**Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
Recommended Quality Grades for Wild Alaska Salmon**

Characteristics Handling	Premium Grade	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C
bled	yes	optional	not applicable	not applicable
chilled	yes	yes	not applicable	not applicable

skin cuts	no cuts	one cut less than 1	one cut up to 1.5	more than grade B
internal cuts	no cuts or tears	no cuts or tears	not more than 0.5 total length of cuts and tears	more than grade B
punctures	no punctures	no punctures	no punctures	punctures allowed
bruising	no bruises	no bruises	slight bruising acceptable	more than grade B
scale loss	not to exceed 15% loss	not to exceed 25% loss	not to exceed 40% loss	more than grade B
ODOR	fresh smell	fresh smell	neutral	slight, not offensive
EYES	bright, clear	bright, clear	dull, not milky or cloudy	milky or cloudy
GILLS	bright red	red	pink	pink to buff
SKIN				
color**	**	**	**	**
slime	clear	clear	cloudy	dull and copious
net marks	no indentations or skin perforations; no broken backbones	no indentations or skin perforations; no broken backbones	slight to moderate indentations	may have moderate indentations; skin may be perforated
scars	none	less than 1, well healed	up to 1.5, well healed	scars permitted
tail/fins	no tail damage or fin loss	no tail damage or fin loss	no tail damage; fin loss to 50%	more than grade B
BELLY CAVITY				
color	bright natural color	bright natural color	slight fading of natural color; slight discoloration acceptable	more than grade B
belly burn	none; no protruding ribs	none; up to 2 protruding ribs acceptable	slight belly burn, up to 6 protruding ribs	more than grade B
cleaning	thorough; no viscera of any kind; collar trimmed,	thorough; no viscera of any kind, collar trimmed	thorough; no viscera of any kind; traces of blood ok	more than grade B
MEAT COLOR*	*	*	*	*

****Skin Color:** Wild Alaska salmon skin color is variable depending on species, location of harvest, sexual maturity, and is not correlated with grades. Users are referred to the ASMI Color Evaluation Guide for Pacific Salmon.

***Meat color:** Meat color is variable depending on species, location of harvest, sexual maturity and is not correlated with grade. Chinook salmon have both red and white meat. Coho salmon meat color ranges from pinkish-red to pale pink. Sockeye salmon meat color is red. Chum & Pink salmon users are referred to the ASMI Meat Color Guide for Wild Alaska Chum Salmon, and Meat Color Guide for Wild Alaska Pink Salmon.

Typical Weight Grades for Wild Alaska Salmon

(in pounds)

Chinook (King)	4 to 7	7 to 11	11 to 18	18 and up	
Chum	4 to 6	6 to 9	9 and up	or 9 to 12	12 and up
Coho (Silver)	2 to 4	4 to 6	6 to 9	9 and up	
Pink	2 to 3	3 to 5	5 and up	or 5 to 7	7 and up
Sockeye (Red)	2 to 4	4 to 6	6 to 9		