Alaska. Where the waters are still pristine and the bounty of nature remains unspoiled. Boasting over one million square miles of rich fishing waters — more than all of the lower 48 states combined — Alaska yields nearly six billion pounds of wild seafood per year. The beauty is that there’s always plenty more left in the sea. That’s because Alaska is the only state in the nation whose constitution mandates that all fisheries be maintained on the sustainable yield principle. The result? Strict harvesting quotas and fishing regulations ensure that Alaska will have an abundance of seafood for years to come.

In fact, the state’s management practices have been so successful that the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) recognizes the Alaska Salmon, Alaska Pollock, Alaska Black Cod and Pacific Halibut fisheries as managed to ensure sustainability of their stocks and their marine environment. Only a few fisheries in the world have earned MSC certification. For more information please visit www.msc.org.

Alaska also legislated against finfish farming/aquaculture, so you know all Alaska Seafood is wild, natural product. Plus, the cold water and natural environment produces lean seafood with firm flesh and great taste.

A Healthy Choice

Alaska Seafood is a source of high-quality protein, vitamins and minerals. What’s more, it contains omega-3 fatty acids, which are not found in many other foods. Since your body cannot produce omega-3s, you need to obtain them from the foods you eat.

The American Heart Association recommends eating two servings of fatty fish each week to achieve the many health benefits from omega-3s:

• Protect heart health
• Reduce risk of sudden death from heart disease
• Reduce risk of stroke
• Reduce the chance of heart disease in Type 2 diabetics
• May improve symptoms of immune and inflammatory disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn’s disease, and some skin conditions
• May reduce the risk of some mental disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease
Essential in infant brain and eye development during pregnancy and nursing
May discourage the development or spread of some types of cancer including breast, colon and prostate

CLEARLY CLEANER FISH

Recent study results released by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation show that fish from Alaska are remarkably free of contaminants, heavy metals like methyl mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Alaska’s medical authorities endorse the unrestricted consumption of Alaska Seafood, citing its many health benefits. To learn more about the study, please visit www.state.ak.us/dec/eh/vet/FMP2.htm

FRESH OR FROZEN?

It may come as a surprise to learn that some of the highest-quality seafood is often frozen. That’s because seafood quality cannot be improved once a fish leaves the water, but can only be maintained. Crucial to maintaining seafood quality are time, temperature and cleanliness. Seafood needs to be frozen very quickly to prevent cellular damage.

- Alaska Seafood is rapidly chilled and held at 32°F, then flash-frozen at a temperature no higher than -20°F
- Glazing (a covering of water that forms a protective sheet of ice) protects the fish from dehydration
- Then, it is held or transported at below 0°F

The result is incredibly delicious seafood bursting with fresh-caught flavor.
The bounty of wild Alaska Seafood is unmatched, with five species of salmon, numerous varieties of whitefish and several shellfish species. Each of these species has a distinct taste, a unique texture, and a different seasonal availability.

**Alaska Salmon**

Alaska Salmon are anadromous, meaning they spawn in fresh water and the young salmon fry migrate to sea where they grow and mature for one to four years, depending on the species. At sea, they build fat and nutrients in preparation for their rigorous journey home. When the time comes, they swim inland – sometimes thousands of miles – to the exact place they were hatched to start the cycle anew.

Salmon are considered “fatty fish” because they are higher in fat than most seafood species. Keep in mind that this fat is considered “good fat” – low in saturated fat and rich in essential omega-3 fatty acids.

There are five unique and delicious species of Alaska Salmon: King, Sockeye, Coho, Keta, and Pink.

**King Salmon (Chinook)**

Alaska King Salmon deserves its royal status and superior retail price because of its regal color, high oil content, and succulent flesh.

- Largest and least abundant of the five Alaska Salmon species
- Average weight is approximately 20 pounds and length ranges from 30 to 40 inches
- King Salmon have a firm texture and robust flavor
- King Salmon are generally marketed in whole, steak, or fillet forms and are available fresh or frozen year-round
- Rich source of omega-3 fatty acids
**Sockeye Salmon (Red)**

The second most abundant Alaska Salmon species is Sockeye or Red Salmon. The distinct, deep red flesh retains its color during cooking, and brings dramatic impact to any presentation.

- Sockeye can grow to almost three feet in length and weigh up to 15 pounds, but average 25 inches and six pounds
- Sockeye have a firm texture and rich flavor
- Alaska Sockeye Salmon are marketed as whole fish, sides, steaks and fillets, which are available fresh throughout the summer and frozen year-round; Canned Sockeye is available year-round
- Rich in antioxidants – and a great source of omega-3 fatty acids

**Coho Salmon (Silver)**

With its orange-red flesh, firm texture, and delicate flavor, Coho or Silver Salmon have gained wide consumer acceptance. Their size, moderate fat content and excellent color retention properties make them popular whether fresh, frozen or smoked.

- Cohos are the second largest of the salmon species, with an average weight of 12 pounds; their length ranges from 25-35 inches
- Many believe Coho Salmon is the best for the grill
- Cohos are most often marketed as whole fish, sides, steaks and fillets, which are available fresh from June through mid-October and frozen year-round
- Low in saturated fat and high in omega-3 fatty acids
**Keta Salmon (Chum, Silverbrite)**

Keta salmon fit retail needs by combining price point, good meat color and mild flavor.

- Ketas average eight pounds, with a length of 25 to 27 inches
- Known for their firm pink flesh, low fat content and mild flavor, Ketas are excellent for grilling and baking as well as smoking.
- Ketas are marketed as whole fish, steaks, and fillets and are available fresh from June through September and frozen year-round
- Low in fat yet high in protein

**Pink Salmon**

Pink Salmon are distinguished by their light, rosy pink-colored flesh, tender texture and delicate flavor.

- Pinks are the smallest in size (two to three pounds) and most abundant of the salmon species
- The abundant supply makes them an attractive value
- Most Pink Salmon are canned but increasing numbers are entering fresh (June through September) and frozen markets
- Low in fat and a great source of omega-3s and essential amino acids
TROLLING

In Southeastern Alaska, the first commercial fishermen to encounter salmon are members of the troll fleet. Trollers are small fishing vessels operated by one or two people who fish with a number of lines and hooks baited with herring or artificial lures. Of all the commercial salmon fishing methods, trolling may be the least efficient from the standpoint of intercepting fish. High-seas trollers must search for fish in the open ocean; while net fishermen, by contrast, wait in areas where salmon are known to school in the migratory route.

By way of compensation, trollers are allowed to fish beyond the inshore limits set for net fishermen, and generally have more days of fishing time. Modern fishery management tends to favor inshore methods and it is unlikely troll fishing will be significantly expanded.

Troll-caught fish are usually “ocean-caught” or “brights,” meaning they are caught before maturity when they move inshore. They are attractive fish, usually somewhat smaller than those caught by the net fisheries, but in full vigor of their ocean period. Only Coho, King and Pink Salmon are taken in any number by the troll fleet and all three species, when delivered by a competent fisherman, command a premium price.

The volume of troll-caught fish is much smaller than that for net-caught fish. Troll-caught salmon generally make up less than ten percent of the total Alaska catch of all species of salmon. But what they lack in quantity, troll-caught salmon make up in quality. No fish is treated with more care from the time it leaves the water until it is delivered to the retailer’s door. A sharp rap on the head quiets the fish before the hook is removed; a thrashing fish is apt to bruise itself or dislodge scales.

The fish is then gilled and gutted. Ice will be carefully packed in the body and head cavity and the fish will be laid on a layer of ice in such a way that the body cavities can drain freely. The surrounding ice will be arranged so that no fish comes in contact with another fish and so that all liquids drain away from the fish and into the vessel’s bilge where it is pumped over-
board. If the vessel has freezing capability, the fish is blast-frozen much the way it is ashore, dipped in fresh water to form an ice glaze, and placed carefully in the hold.

Almost all troll-caught fish go into the fresh, frozen or smoked market. The small number of fish represented in the troll catch, combined with their uniform attractiveness, makes them the most valuable, pound for pound, of Alaska Salmon.

GILLNETTING

The greatest number of Alaska Salmon are caught in gillnets of one type or another. Gillnetting involves laying a net wall in the water in the path of the fish and waiting for it to put its head into the mesh. When it does, the gills become entangled in the webbing and prevent the fish from escaping.

Most gillnetters are small one and two-man boats. State law dictates that gillnetters in Bristol Bay may be no longer than 32 feet. Most gillnetters outside of Bristol Bay are in the 32 to 42 foot range.

A gillnet fisherman uses a net from 900 to 1800 feet long, a choice made not by him, but by the State of Alaska for fishery management reasons.

Some gillnetters are equipped to carry their fish in ice, or even in refrigerated holds, but the vast majority delivers their cargo daily. In areas like Bristol Bay, where fishing can be extremely heavy, a gillnetter may be forced to deliver every few hours simply because the small vessel will not hold the quantity of fish caught in a day. In such cases, the hold is usually divided into several bins, and each bin is lined with a cargo net. When the gillnetter comes alongside the tendering vessel, the cargo nets are simply lifted aboard, emptied and returned to the catcher vessel. The cargo-net system, relatively new in the fishery, reduces handling of the fish, and has contributed significantly to the quality of the catch.

PURSE SEINING

Large numbers of salmon are caught with seines in Southeastern Alaska, Central Alaska and Western Alaska, up to the tip of the Alaska Peninsula. No purse seining is allowed west of the Alaska Peninsula on the north side. Purse seiners are generally larger than gillnetters, (so they can operate in the sometimes-stormy
fjords and channels found in that part of the state) but by Alaska law may be no longer than 58 feet.

A purse seiner is a net that is set in a circle and can be drawn closed at the bottom. Because salmon migrate in tight schools, it is not unusual for an Alaskan seiner to “wrap up” 250 to 1500 fish or more with one set. In addition, the salmon's tendency to jump and “fin” on the surface gives away the school's location as it moves through the water. When not actually engaged in setting or retrieving the net, every person on a purse seiner is watching the water for a sign of fish.
ALASKA WHITEFISH VARIETIES

There are several varieties of Alaska Whitefish including Alaska Halibut, Cod, Pollock, Sole, Black Cod, and Surimi Seafood.

With the exception of Black Cod, all Alaska Whitefish Varieties are high in protein and low in fat yet a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are not found in other proteins (such as chicken, beef and pork). Alaska Black Cod is a “fatty fish” and one of the richest sources of omega-3s.

All of these white-fleshed fish live on or near the bottom of the sea. They spend their lives out in the ocean, and never enter fresh water. All Alaska Whitefish Varieties spawn many times in their life, ensuring a stabilized population that can withstand natural fluctuations in the environment and continuously fulfill high consumer demand.

ALASKA HALIBUT

Alaska Halibut is the world’s premium whitefish, with a sweet, delicate flavor, firm texture and snow-white flesh.

- The largest of all the flatfish – the largest one on record weighed 700 pounds!
- A meaty flavorful fish, with a firm texture – ideal for grilling and baking
- Alaska Halibut is generally marketed in flitch (fillet) or steak forms and is available fresh from March through November; frozen halibut is available year-round
- Low in calories, fat, and sodium
**Pacific Cod (True Cod, Grey Cod)**

Pacific Cod is a member of the family Gadidae and is related to both Alaska Pollock and Atlantic Cod. Alaska Cod is one of the most asked for North Pacific groundfish.

- Alaska Cod has an average weight of five to ten pounds and is almost always sold as skinless, boneless fillets
- The fillets are moist and firm, with a distinctive large flake and a slightly sweet flavor
- Pacific Cod is available fresh in the winter and fall; frozen cod is available year-round
- High in protein while very low in fat

**Alaska Pollock**

Alaska Pollock is a member of the cod family and shares many of its attributes: a firm texture, mild flavor and snow-white fillets. It should not be confused with Atlantic Pollack, *Pollachius virens*, which is darker and oilier with a “fishier” flavor, or Russian Pollock, which is harvested under a different management system.

- Alaska Pollock range in weight from one to four pounds, and average one-and-a-half to two pounds
- The Alaska Pollock fishery is, by volume, the largest fishery in the United States and the second largest fishery in the world. The catch has averaged about 1.15 million metric tons per year since 1977
- Harvested in the fall and winter months, skinless, boneless Alaska Pollock fillets are available frozen year-round
- High in protein and low in fat
**Alaska Sole (Flounder)**

Alaska is home to some of the most prized species of sole including: Dover, Rex, Rock, Flathead, and Yellowfin.

- There is a wide variance in size between the sole species, ranging from 18” (Butter Sole, Yellowfin Sole) to three feet (Starry Flounder); most average 24 inches
- Alaska Sole fillets have a delicate, mild flavor and tender texture
- Alaska Sole fillets are available fresh most of the year and frozen year-round
- High in protein, low in saturated fat

**Alaska Black Cod (Sablefish)**

Alaska Black Cod has rich oil content, which gives it a distinctive flavor and texture. Alaska has the world’s largest Black Cod population, thanks to the state’s tight regulations to ensure sustainability.

- Black Cod reach lengths of 40 inches and can grow to 40 pounds but average five to ten pounds
- Its succulence is often compared to Sea Bass
- Alaska Black Cod is generally sold as fillets, which are available fresh March through November, and frozen year-round
- Rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty-acids
Alaska Surimi Seafood

Alaska Surimi Seafood is real seafood, made with genuine Alaska Pollock that has been flavored with crab, shrimp, scallops and/or lobster then cut into portions. It's pre-cooked and ready to use in any recipe calling for the flavor of shellfish.

- Available forms include whole legs, mini-cuts, chunk meat and shreds
  - Whole legs offer the appearance of Alaska Crab legs
  - Mini-cuts are pre-cut into bite-sized portions
  - Chunk meat provides tempting chunks that look and taste like fresh crab meat
  - Shredded Alaska Surimi Seafood is easy to use as an ingredient in salads, stuffings, hot and cold sandwiches and spreads
- Alaska Surimi Seafood is available year-round both fresh and frozen
There are three basic types of fishing gear used to harvest Alaska Whitefish varieties: trawl, longline, and in limited amounts, pots.

**Trawl**

A trawl is a large, bag-shaped net that is towed by a fishing vessel. Trawlers are generally large boats ranging from 70 feet to over 200 feet in length. The “trawl” doors, because of the way they are built and rigged to the trawl, keep the mouth of the trawl open as it moves through the water. The headrope is equipped with floats forming the upper opening. The footrope is rigged with weights forming the lower opening. Trawlers use sophisticated ultrasonic devices both for location of fish underwater and for species identification.

Pelagic trawls sometimes contact the ocean bottom, but their heavy doors and wires are kept off the bottom to avoid damage to the ocean floor’s habitat. Fishing with pelagic trawls is a selective method of fishing, because the nets can be operated in ways to minimize the incidental catch of non-target species. Pollock are usually harvested with few other species. Sole are generally captured in bottom trawls in mixtures of the various species which are sorted onboard the fishing vessel.

Trawling is allowed only in certain areas and strict limits are enforced upon the amount of non-target species, such as crab or halibut, which may be caught. In fact, it happens that a trawl fishery is closed because it has reached the pre-set “bycatch” limit, and does not achieve full harvest of its target species.

Upon locating a school of the desired species, the vessel trawls through the school and captures the fish. The fish accumulate in the end of the trawl, which is called the “cod end”, regardless of the species of fish being harvested. Electronic sensors tell the harvester exactly where the trawl is in relation to the fish and the ocean floor, while other sensors report how full the trawl becomes. When capture is complete, the trawl is brought to the surface.
Once the trawl full of fish reaches the surface of the water, one of two things happens. If the vessel has the ability to process the fish onboard, it is called a factory-trawler, a freezer-trawler or catcher-processor. These vessels simply pull the net aboard, empty the net, sort the species, and process the catch. If the vessel is only capable of catching fish, then it must deliver the catch to a processing plant. These processing plants might be in other vessels, called floating processors, or they might be on shore. The catcher-vessel, or trawler, usually takes the fish onboard and stores them in refrigerated tanks below deck. This keeps the fish in top quality until they are delivered and processed. In either case, the fish are kept well chilled, and are processed within a few hours of harvest. Trawls are the only fishing method used to harvest pollock and sole. They are also used to catch most of the cod harvest, but never halibut.

**Longline**

The only legal fishing method for halibut is longline gear. Longline fishing is also often used for harvesting black cod and Pacific Cod, but never for pollock or sole. Longline fishing vessels are usually independently run by owner-operators. Some longliners are small boats, less than 50 feet in length, but most are somewhat larger. Longline gear is composed of groundline, buoy lines, and gangions, which are short pieces of line with hooks on the end. Longlines are set along the seabed, with baited hooks every few yards. Longline hooks are retrieved one at a time. The fishermen can unhook other species of fish and return them alive to the sea without bringing them on board. In this way, longlining is considered a style of fishing with very little bycatch.
There are several different species of Alaska Shellfish including King Crab, Snow Crab, Dungeness Crab, and Weathervane Scallops.

Alaska Crab is already fully cooked but should be heated-through before serving: just boil, steam, broil or barbecue for 4 minutes.

**Alaska King Crab**

No other shellfish in the world projects a more elegant image or offers such widespread consumer appeal than Alaska King Crab. King Crab is the largest member of the crab family. Its body and four visible legs are covered with sharp, thorn-like spines.

- Alaska King Crab average six to ten pounds
- Sweet, rich in flavor with a tender texture
- King Crab is generally marketed as individual legs and claws, which are available frozen year-round; limited amounts of fresh King Crab is available in the fall
- Low in fat and calories, and high in protein

**Snow Crab (Opilio, Bairdi)**

Alaska Snow Crab is one of the moist unique, flavorful and popular shellfish items.

- Alaska Snow Crab average one to three pounds
- Noted for its sweet, delicate flavor, snowy white meat and tender texture
- Alaska Snow Crab is generally marketed as clusters/sections which are available frozen year-round
- Low in fat, calories, and high in protein
**Dungeness Crab**

The largest and most flavorful Dungeness Crab comes from Alaska. Alaska Dungeness Crab enjoys a connoisseur’s reputation, and is well known for its quality.

- Alaska Dungeness Crab average two to three pounds
- It is treasured for its beautiful orange shell color, distinctive sweet flavor and tender flaky white meat
- Frozen Dungeness Crab is available year-round, already cooked, in several forms: whole or in clusters/sections; live crab are also available summer through fall
- High in protein but low in calories

**Harvesting Alaska Crab**

Crabbing, the method of harvesting Dungeness, King, and Snow Crab, is dangerous and grueling work. Steel traps or pots are baited with cut fish, then pushed over the side. Buoy marks the location of each pot, and its owner. At the right time, judged by gut instinct and years of experience, the pots are hauled in, quickly emptied into the hold, rebaited, and returned to the ocean floor.

**Weathervane Scallops**

Alaska Scallops are consistent in size and appearance, as well as flavor, texture and freshness. Harvested from icy, clean Alaskan waters and immediately shucked and frozen at sea, Alaska Scallops live up to their reputation as the world’s finest.

- Alaska Scallops are renowned for their size they are the largest scallops available anywhere
- They are 100% natural, with no artificial treatments or additives
- Alaska Scallops feature a sweet, tender, buttery meat that is creamy in color and becomes white when cooked
- Available frozen year-round

**Harvesting Scallops**

Alaska Weathervane Scallops are harvested by a carefully regulated dredge fishery.
**Basic Cooking Tips for Wild Alaska Seafood**

Alaska Seafood is one of the easiest proteins to prepare if you know a few basic steps and which species works best with different cooking methods (detailed below).

It’s also important to know when seafood is done cooking. Seafood turns from translucent to opaque as it cooks so the easiest method is simply to monitor the color change. To check for doneness, slide a sharp knife tip into the center of the thickest part of a cooking seafood portion. Twist the knife slightly to expose the center of the cooking seafood portion. Like most proteins, seafood will continue to cook after it is removed from the heat source, so remove it from the heat just as soon as it turns from translucent to opaque throughout. Keep seafood warm until it is served.

**Sautéing/Pan-Searing Alaska Seafood**

This method of cooking can be used for many species: salmon, cod, halibut, pollock, sole, black cod, King Crab, Snow Crab, Dungeness Crab, and scallops.

- It is crucial to start with a hot pan, and to leave the seafood undisturbed while it browns. Then, simply flip the fish and cook until done.

  **Note:** Thin pieces of fish can be cooked completely on top of the stove. Thicker portions may need to be finished in the oven. Make sure you are using an oven-safe sauté pan without plastic handles.

- It is also important to use a pan big enough so as to not crowd the food. If the pan is overcrowded, its temperature will drop quickly and a good seal will not form on the food.

**Sautéing Basics**

- Preheat pan
- Add a small amount of oil
- Season fish with salt, pepper or favorite spice
- Add fish to pan, skin side up, and cook until browned
- Flip
- Cook just until opaque throughout
**Pan-Searing Basics**

- Preheat pan to a higher temperature
- Add a small amount of oil
- Season fish
- Add fish to pan, skin side up, and cook until browned
- Flip
- Finish thicker fillets in an oven preheated to 400°F
- Cook just until opaque throughout

**Simple Sauces**

There are a myriad of simple pan sauces you can use to finish your fish. Perhaps the easiest sauce involves deglazing the same pan you used to prepare your seafood.

- Remove seafood from the pan
- Add shallots, garlic, mushrooms or finely chopped tomatoes and sauté for several minutes
- Deglaze the pan using a small amount of liquid (wine, broth/stock) for the sauce
- Reduce the sauce
- Add finishing ingredients/seasonings (fresh herbs, mustard, peppercorns, capers)
- Adjust the seasoning
- Return seafood to pan to reheat
- Add butter, if desired
- Once the sauce is ready, spoon it over your fish after it has been plated
GRILLING & BROILING ALASKA SEAFOOD

This method of cooking can be used for many species: salmon, cod, halibut, pollock, sole, black cod, King Crab, Snow Crab, Dungeness Crab, and scallops. For smaller fish or shellfish a grill rack may be useful, and for larger portions a grill basket makes it easier to flip your fish.

GRILLING BASICS

• Thoroughly clean and preheat the grill
• Brush grill with oil to prevent sticking
• Marinate seafood or brush with oil and season
• Place the seafood on the grill
• Turn fish 90 degrees to produce crosshatch marks, if desired
• Flip the item and cook to the desired doneness

BROILING BASICS

• Preheat broiler/oven to medium-high (450°F)
• Spray-coat or foil line a baking sheet or broiler pan
• Place seafood on pan
• Brush with oil and season
• Flip only very thick portions, such as roasts
• Cook just until opaque throughout
Other Ways to Prepare Alaska Seafood

There are many other delicious ways to prepare a heart-healthy meal. Roasting (often called baking), poaching, and steaming are three other great ways to serve up a meal that's sure to be a crowd pleaser.

Roasting Basics
• Preheat oven to 400°F
• Spray-coat or foil-line a baking sheet
• Place seafood on baking sheet
• Brush with oil and season
• No need to flip
• Cook just until opaque throughout

Poaching Basics
• Cook in liquid in a big saucepan and a good stock
• Add water/seASONed liquid to large pan and bring to a boil
  (add flavors like lemon juice, wine, fresh herbs, and dried spices)
• Turn off heat
• Add seafood to liquid, skin side down
• Return heat to a simmer
• Cover pan tightly
• Cook just until opaque throughout

Steaming Basics
• Use steam rather than liquid to cook fish slowly so fish is tender
• Bring about 1-inch of water/seASONed liquid to a boil in a deep frying pan
• Turn off heat; place steamer in pan and open up sides
• Place seafood in steamer in a single layer and season
• Return liquid to a boil
• Cover loosely
• Steam just until fish is opaque throughout
GOOD FOR YOU. GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Already serving up Alaska fish and seafood? Then you've made a choice that can be good for your body, as well as good for one of the world's largest bodies of fishing waters. You can enjoy the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids, as well as the knowledge that your choice in seafood is helping support sustainable fishing practices. And you get great tasting selections, from salmon to shellfish. Wild and wonderful and good for you too, that's the Alaska Seafood story.