

Tips to Remember When Buying Florida Seafood



Florida consumers have the luxury of being able to choose from over 80 varieties of high-quality fresh seafood harvested from local waters. Below are some simple steps consumers can take to ensure they receive the maximum benefits associated with buying Florida seafood.

Choose a Variety of Seafood: Health experts recommend eating a variety of seafood at least twice a week to maximize its multiple health benefits and mitigate potential risks. By choosing different types of seafood, you also help reduce pressure on highly targeted species as well. To locate specific Florida seafood products visit:

<http://app1.florida-agriculture.com/FACTS/Consumer/>

Use Your Senses: High-quality fresh seafood should not have strong odors, or show signs of adulteration (i.e. bruises, browning of edges, cuts, tears etc.). These are signs that the product is either not fresh, is low-quality, or has been handled improperly, which can all affect its edibility. There is nothing wrong with asking your fish monger to show you the product before purchasing it to ensure you get the freshest seafood possible.

Know your Seasons: Being an informed consumer means knowing when and where fresh seafood is available. Just as Florida produce has “peak” seasons of availability, so does Florida seafood. Fishing regulations, for instance may prohibit the harvest of a product during certain times of the year, making it more difficult to find it fresh during these time periods (*most Florida seafood, however, is available frozen year round.*) The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides consumers with a helpful resource in identifying what times of the year fresh Florida seafood products are available: <http://www.fl-seafood.com/availability.htm>

Choose Suitable Alternatives: In some cases it might not be possible to buy Florida-harvested seafood. The product might be out of season or unavailable, it could be cost-prohibitive, or it simply is not harvested in the state (i.e. salmon or sea scallops). When possible, consider purchasing seafood products that are harvested regionally or in the U.S. to help support the long-term health and sustainability of domestic fisheries. To learn more about U.S seafood visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/>.



Keep it Moving, Clean & Cold: Seafood is a highly perishable product if not handled correctly. Purchase seafood toward the end of your trip, and make sure it stays cold on the way home. Prevent bacterial cross-contamination by keeping raw seafood away from cooked seafood items. Once at home, be sure to store seafood in the coldest part of the fridge to maintain quality if you plan to eat it right away; most fresh seafood should typically be eaten within 24-48 hours of purchase. To learn more about safe seafood handling methods visit:

http://www.deseagrant.org/sites/deseagrant.org/files/product-docs/safe_seafood_2010_lr.pdf

Ask Questions: If you have questions/concerns about the products you are purchasing, talk to the people who are selling them to you! Legitimate fish mongers should be able to provide you with the details you are seeking. Ask them for suitable alternatives if you cannot find the product you want.

How do the Different Types of Florida Seafood Compare to One Another?

Name	Appearance	Texture Cooked	Flavor	Recipe Substitutes	Name	Appearance	Texture Cooked	Flavor	Recipe Substitutes
AMBERJACK 	Raw: Grey/white Cooked: White	Firm	Mild	Mahi-mahi Mullet Tilefish	ROCK SHRIMP 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm	Mild Sweet Lobster-like	Shrimp Spiny lobster
BLUE CRAB (HARD) 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Delicate Moist Flaky	Mild Sweet	Stone crab claws Spiny lobster Shrimp	SHARK 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm Dense Moist	Full Slightly sweet	Swordfish Yellowfin tuna
CLAMS 	Raw: Ivory to yellow-gold Cooked: Tan	Mild Sweet to salty	Soft	Scallops Oysters	SHRIMP 	Raw: Pink-white to grey Cooked: White	Firm Tender	Mild Sweet	Spiny lobster, Rock shrimp
FLOUNDER 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm Small flake	Mild Sweet	Pompano Grouper Snapper	SNAPPER 	Raw: Pink-white Cooked: White	Firm Medium flake	Mild Sweet	Grouper Pompano Tilefish
GROUPE 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm Large flake Moist	Mild Sweet	Snapper Mahi-mahi Tilefish	SPANISH MACKEREL 	Raw: Grey with dark bands Cooked: Off-white	Soft Medium flake Moist	Full	Mullet King mackerel
KING MACKEREL 	Raw: Grey with dark bands Cooked: Off-white	Soft Flaky Moist	Full	Swordfish Spanish mackerel	SPINY LOBSTER 	Raw: Pink-white Cooked: White	Firm Dense	Mild Sweet	Blue crab Rock shrimp Shrimp
MAHI-MAHI 	Raw: Pink Cooked: Off-white	Firm Large flake Moist	Mild	Pompano Grouper	STONE CRAB 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm	Mild Sweet	Blue crab Spiny lobster
MULLET 	Raw: Grey/white Cooked: White	Firm Small flake	Mild	Mackerel Pompano	SWORDFISH 	Raw: White to pink Cooked: Off-white	Firm Dense	Full Slightly sweet	Yellowfin tuna Shark
OYSTERS 	Raw: Ivory, tan or grey Cooked: Ivory, tan or grey	Firm Meaty	Mild Salty	Clams	TILEFISH 	Raw: Pink-white Cooked: White	Firm Moist Small flake	Mild	Grouper Snapper
POMPANO 	Raw: White Cooked: White	Firm Small flake	Mild	Mahi mahi Snapper Flounder	YELLOWFIN TUNA 	Raw: Dark red Cooked: Red to light grey	Firm Moist Dense Large flake	Mild to full	Swordfish Mahi-mahi Shark

Chart taken from: <http://www.fl-seafood.com/>

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