

Did You Know?

Not all seafood is created equal. Much of the fish available today in the United States is imported, frequently from places where health, safety and environmental standards for growing or catching fish are weak or non-existent. Less than 2 percent of seafood imports to the U.S. are inspected for contamination. Also, many popular wild fish have been managed poorly and are depleted, are caught using gear that can hurt habitat and other wildlife, and/or contain substances like mercury or PCBs that can cause serious health problems. These concerns can make choosing healthful and sustainable fish challenging.

Fortunately, there are still good domestic seafood options. This card provides recommendations for cleaner, safer, more sustainable choices for popular fish nationwide. For additional local alternatives in specific regions, see:

www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish

food&waterwatch

Questions to Ask About Your Seafood

- **Where is it from?** Choose domestic over imported.
- **Is it caught or farmed locally?** Choose local foods over those shipped from far away.
- **Is it farmed or wild?** Choose wild, unless otherwise stated on this card.
- **How is it caught?** Ask if the method has high bycatch or habitat damage — favor fish caught by hook and line, handline, troll, jig and speargun.
- **How is it farmed?** Choose seafood that has been farmed in the United States, especially in low- or no-output, recirculating systems. Tilapia, shrimp, sea bream and cobia are examples of fish that are or are soon to be farmed this way in the United States.
- **Is it associated with any contaminants?** Avoid mercury, PCBs and antibiotics.

Tip: Try a variety of seafood. This reduces your exposure to possible contaminants and helps to lower pressure on wild fish that have become over-popular choices.

Our Dirty Dozen

Here's a quick guide to our "dirty dozen" of common seafood choices nationwide that we give a big thumbs down.

1. **Atlantic cod**
2. **Atlantic flatfish**, e.g. Atlantic halibut, flounders and sole
3. **Caviar**, especially from beluga and other wild-caught sturgeon
4. **Chilean seabass**
5. **Eel**
6. **Farmed salmon**, often called "Atlantic salmon." Tip: don't be fooled by "organic" salmon — it's usually farmed internationally and not certified by U.S. standards!
7. **Imported Basa/Swai/Tra** (Tip: these are often called "catfish" — ask where it is from and check country of origin labels.)
8. **Imported farmed shrimp**
9. **Imported king crab**
10. **Orange roughy**
11. **Sharks**
12. **Tunas**, especially **Atlantic bluefin** (Pacific albacore and Atlantic skipjack are exempted)

www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Smart Seafood Guide

2010


food&waterwatch

National Seafood Substitution Recommendations from Food & Water Watch

How to use this card: Look for the type of seafood you like and find safer, more sustainable recommendations below. Sometimes the better choice is just a more specific type of fish that you may already like. Other times, we suggest a substitution. See the reverse for “Questions to Ask About Seafood” that can help guide you to better options and our “Dirty Dozen” list of fish to avoid.


Fillet fish

Mild, white fish




If you like: catfish, Chilean seabass, flounder, halibut, orange roughy, pollock, sole
Try: hook-and-line-caught haddock, Pacific halibut, mahi-mahi*, U.S.-farmed catfish, U.S.-farmed tilapia, yellowtail snapper

Thicker, more flavorful fish



If you like: groupers, jacks, mackerel, salmon, snappers, tuna, wahoo
Try: Alaskan salmon*, Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic skipjack tuna*, black cod (sablefish), mangrove/gray snapper, Pacific albacore tuna*, Pacific cod (not trawl-caught), pompano, U.S.-farmed barramundi, wreckfish

Steak-like fish




If you like: bonito, salmon, sharks, swordfish, tunas
Try: Alaskan salmon*, Atlantic mackerel, mahi-mahi*, Pacific albacore tuna*, Pacific halibut


***Choose pole- or troll-caught fish**

These recommendations are intended as a general reference. They are not intended to provide specific medical advice, supplant any government warnings or otherwise prevent exposure to any health hazards associated with seafood. People should always follow proper acquisition, handling and cooking procedures of any seafood they prepare or consume. The devastating April 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is likely to impact availability of some seafood items on this card. For more information, see the latest government updates at <http://bit.ly/gulfseafood> and <http://bit.ly/gulfNOAA>

Shellfish and more



If you like: abalone, clams, conch, escargot, oysters, mussels
Try: U.S.-farmed abalone, U.S.-farmed escargot, U.S.-farmed mussels, U.S.-farmed oysters, U.S. wild-caught or farmed crawfish, U.S. wild hand-raked or farmed clams.




If you like: calamari and octopus
Try: Atlantic trap- or net-caught squid, “California” (U.S. Pacific Market) squid




If you like: crab and lobster
Try: U.S. wild-caught crabs including Alaskan king, dungeness, golden, rock (“peekytoe”) and stone, “Maine” lobster (American)



If you like: scallops
Try: U.S. diver-caught scallops



If you like: shrimp
Try: U.S. wild-caught shrimp, especially South Atlantic white, Pacific (“Oregon”) pinks and Florida (“Key West” or “Tortugas”) pinks; U.S.-farmed shrimp



If you like: small, very flavorful fish (like sardines and anchovies)
Try: U.S. wild-caught anchovies, U.S. wild-caught sardines