



SOURCING Your Seafood

Knowing what types of seafood Florida has to offer, when it's available and where to look for it can help consumers make safe and nutritious choices.



Seafood is good for you, and experts recommend that we should eat two seafood meals each week. However, keeping seafood selections fresh, flavorful, abundant and safe for consumers is a challenging task for producers, distributors, restaurants and retailers.

Florida fishermen harvest seafood in waters on both the Gulf and South Atlantic sides of the state and produce more than 80 varieties of wild-caught and farm-raised products. Florida's 400-plus licensed processing and wholesaling plants—more than any other state—account for more than \$500 million in annual processed value and include some of the world's largest shrimp and fish processors, as well as specialized processors of oysters, clams and stone crabs. The seafood industry supports the economy of many coastal towns, providing income and

employment where there is little other economic activity.

Florida Sea Grant keeps the seafood industry up to date on the latest handling and processing techniques, relevant regulations and other critical information. All seafood processors in the U.S. follow the strict set of safe handling techniques known as the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point protocol, or HACCP. Through UF/IFAS Extension, Florida Sea Grant agents also teach consumers about seafood nutrition and the benefits of seafood consumption.

Seafood Consumption

Americans consume about 15 pounds of seafood per capita annually. In Florida, it's more than double that, at 31 pounds, but still far shy of the 42-pound global average. Japanese consume more than 150 pounds per capita, annually.

ABOUT FLORIDA SEA GRANT

Florida Sea Grant is a university-based program that taps into the research expertise of more than 800 coastal and ocean scientists at the state's 16 major universities and research laboratories. The program's goal is to support research, education and extension to enhance economic opportunities for Floridians while protecting coastal resources. Florida Sea Grant is a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Florida Board of Education and Florida's citizens and governments.

The program is also an integral part of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida, one of the nation's leading land-grant universities. Extension and education programs are conducted in partnership with UF/IFAS Extension and coastal counties of Florida.

Sea Grant agents live and work in coastal communities. They have a breadth of experiences and tremendous trust from their local residents as reliable sources of science-based information. Seven statewide extension specialists also lead highly relevant programs in seafood safety, boating and waterway planning, land-use law, aquaculture and fisheries management.

MAKING SEAFOOD CHOICES*There's an app for that!*

Locally caught seafood is often preferred, but growing demand requires multiple sources to meet consumer expectations. Fortunately, we live in Florida with great resources throughout the state for fresh and frozen seafood. If you want to know if your seafood is wild-caught, farm-raised, foreign or domestic, the best option is to ask your local seafood retailer.

Florida Sea Grant and UF/IFAS Extension also provide an app, "Florida Seafood at Your Fingertips," to help with your seafood choices. You can download it for free (Android and iOS) at: www.flseagrant.org/seafood



The majority of seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported, and all of it is required to have a country of origin label. Farm-raised seafood currently contributes about half of the world's fishery output for human consumption, compared to just five percent in 1962. More than 60 percent of the world's farm-raised seafood comes from China and another 25 percent from the rest of Asia (mostly India, Vietnam and Indonesia).

Seafood Safety

Both imported and domestic seafood is becoming safer to consume. All imported seafood has to meet the same food safety requirements as seafood produced in the United States.

"It seems there are far more safety issues associated with seafood in the news or on the web than other food commodities like meat and poultry or produce," says Florida Sea Grant seafood safety specialist George Baker. "However, unless you have a seafood-related allergy, seafood is as just as safe, or safer, than any other food."

"I can understand consumer concern when seafood contamination makes the news. Florida Sea Grant, along with regulatory agencies, can help determine what the impacts of these events might be and if people should avoid eating seafood from the affected area," Baker says.



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