

Buying and Cooking Seafood

Buying and cooking seafood can be very intimidating, but it just takes a little care to do it properly. Use all your senses to buy the freshest seafood. Here are some tips to help you be smarter about buying seafood and cooking it.



Choosing Seafood

Leaner fish: Cod, flounder, red snapper, drum, halibut

Fattier fish: Salmon, tuna, mackerel, blue fish, herring

Buying at the store - Fish:

- Smells like the body of water it comes from (No fishy smell!)
- Look for clear eyes on whole fish, NOT cloudy eyes
- Look for a bright color, with no brown/gray spots
- Touch of the fish should be firm, NOT mushy or slimy

Tip: Wild-caught fish is generally healthier than farm-raised fish! (But farm-raised fish is better than none.)

Buying at the store - Crustaceans: (i.e., lobster, crab, shrimp, crawfish)

- Shrimp should have harder shell
- Younger/smaller lobsters have a sweeter, fresher taste

Tip: You may need live crustaceans depending on the application.

Buying at the store - Clams and mussels:

- Always buy alive, with a closed shell. Open-shelled clams or mussels that do not close when you tap them are dead. Don't buy them.

Cooking Seafood

Do not overcook!

Choose the proper cooking technique: grilling, poaching, steaming, etc.

Doneness - Fish:

- Final cooking temperature for seafood is 145°F.
- Fish that is done flakes easily when tested with a fork. Use this technique for thinner filets.

Tip: You can use a meat thermometer for thick fish like tuna steak or salmon filet.

Doneness - Crustaceans:

- Look for bright red color of shell
- The meat of the shellfish should be white, firm, and not transparent.
- When tugged, the antennae of the lobster should come off easily
- Cooked crabs will start to float in boiling water

Tip: Smaller crustaceans, like shrimp, cook quickly and should be cooked or added last in dish to avoid over-cooking

Doneness - Clams and mussels:

- All shells have opened