



## □ Salmon

[Family Salmonidae, Genus Oncorhynchus (Pacific) and Salmo (Atlantic) species]

Salmon are large seagoing Trout. Actually all Trout are Salmonidae but we've broken out those not called Salmon to a Trout heading for clarity, Salmon live most of their lives in the deep oceans but return to the river of their birth to spawn - and then die. Why they die I do not know, other fish of the same genus, even seagoing ones, survive spawning (so are classed as Trout). Atlantic salmon have a high mortality at spawning but some survive.

### Wild Salmon:

Leaner and with a more complex flavor than farmed salmon, wild is in short supply and will cost at least three times as much per pound as farmed salmon. Keeping the price and flavor in mind you should not use complex recipes that will mask the flavor and texture of the fish or you might as well use farmed.

Wild salmon may be caught in rivers and estuaries in nets or at sea on troll lines. Troll fishermen say their fish are handled more carefully than netted so are more consistent in quality.

Wild salmon vary considerable size differences even within a species because they reach sexual maturity at a variety of ages. There is also a quality difference within each species depending on which river they are associated with, but information on that is currently very unreliable.

### The Main Species of Salmon

- \* King (Chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) which is the largest, fattiest, and most flavorful may weigh up to 125 pounds. Flesh may vary from ivory to deep red depending on diet.

- \* Chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*) are smaller salmon weighing up to 10 pounds with creamy pink to medium red flesh that has a mild, delicate flavor.

- \* Pink (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) is the smallest salmon weighing up to 5 pounds and the most plentiful. The flesh is light pink and delicate in flavor.

- \* Coho (Silver, *O. kisutch*) weighs up to 15 pounds with a medium lean firm flesh with a fine texture and consistently red color.

- \* Sockeye (Red, *O. nerka*) weighs up to 7 pounds at maturity. It is highly sought after for its very lean deep red flesh.

- \* Masu (yamame, *O. masou* - Asia only.
- \* Amago (biwamasu, *O. rhodurus*) - Asia only.
- \* Atlantic (*Salmo salar*) is no longer marketed wild in any quantity, the population having been decimated on both sides of the Atlantic by pollution. It is the preferred farm salmon.

### Farm Salmon

Salmon are both fast growing and in great demand by consumers which makes them prime subjects for fish farming. Farmed salmon are predominantly Atlantic salmon, even in Pacific coast farms, because they are less aggressive than Pacific salmon and produce a higher yield, but a fair amount of Pacific salmon is still farmed. Farming does have some ecological impacts on the wild fishery, particularly from escaped fish (greatly reduced in recent years) and an economic impact from reducing the price wild salmon can fetch.

Prep & Cooking Salmon

### Color:

Salmon are noted for the strong pinkish red color of their flesh, the result of carotenoid dyes acquired from a diet of crustaceans. While intensity of this color has very little relationship to quality, consumer perception is that it is the primary quality marker so carotenoid dyes are added to the feed of farm raised salmon.

### Raw Salmon

Raw Salmon is extremely popular in sushi bars, but problems with parasitic worms should be kept in mind. Nematode worms can't live long in humans but can cause considerable pain for a short time. Tapeworms (from wild river caught salmon) can live for years.

### Cooking

Salmon are generally quite large so are usually sold as steaks or fillets rather than whole fish. Split salmon heads are sold in Asian markets for soup stock, and some provide the head along with all the fins and bones the fillets have been removed from. The head and bones provide a very substantial salmon flavored stock with a large amount of oil. When the oil is separated the stock is without any of the orange salmon color.

Because of its oiliness, salmon is often broiled or grilled, but it is also poached for many recipes.

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