Caviar

Caviar is the unfertilized eggs, or roe, of species from the Acipenseridae family, which consists of Sturgeons. The eggs are removed from the fish then separated and salted. Caviar technically only refers to Sturgeon roe. Roe of other fish like salmon and trout cannot be called Caviar unless identified with species name, for example Trout Caviar, to avoid any intentional or unintentional misrepresentation.

The approximately 26 species of Sturgeon are found across the Northern Hemisphere. In the Caspian Sea three types of Sturgeon have been fished for Caviar: the Beluga (Huso huso), Osetra (Acipenser persicus and A. gueldenstaedtii) and Sevruga (A. stellatus). In the U.S., production has focused on White Sturgeon (A. transmontanus).

In the early 19th century the U.S. began extensive fishing of native Sturgeon populations and became the leading producer of Caviar. However, by the end of the century the Sturgeon populations had been decimated due to overfishing and during the 20th century the Caspian Sea became the new top Caviar. These populations have since declined due to overfishing, high levels of illegal fishing and pollution. Many consider these species in danger of extinction. In response to the decline in wild populations, aquaculture of Sturgeon is currently growing in the U.S. and around the world. Fish farms in the U.S. are growing White Sturgeon and other species, and farmed U.S. Caviar’s reputation and popularity are growing, in part because of the environmentally sound way it is raised. Siberian Sturgeon (A. baerri) and Golden Osetra Sturgeon (A. gueldenstaedtii) are also popular farm-raised Sturgeon.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood WATCH® rates caviar from US farmed sturgeon (Atlantic, Beluga, Russian, Sevruga, Siberian, Sterlet, and White Sturgeon) and from Canadian farmed White Sturgeon as a “Best Choice” due to low risk of environmental impact. Caviar from wild White Sturgeon caught in the Lower Columbia River is a “Good Alternative.” And US wild caught Paddlefish and Shovelnose Sturgeon is rated “Avoid.”

Sources

Species Name
Family: Acipenseridae

Source
Caviar is available farmed from many countries including the U.S. and France. In the U.S., California, Idaho and Florida are the leading farmed Sturgeon producers. Other Sturgeon species are wild-captured and farmed in other areas of the world. The Caspian Sea and the surrounding countries, including Russia and Iran, are noted for their Caviar, as well as for the low population levels of Sturgeon species in that region.
Seasonality
Farmed Caviar is available year-round although the quantity varies. The peak availability is before the holiday season.

Fishing Method
Sturgeon is available wild-captured and farmed. Farmed Caviar is raised in an environmentally sound way in the U.S. and is a great alternative to wild.

Features

Flavor
Caviar is known for having a subtle buttery flavor but individual species have their own distinct flavor. White Sturgeon is rich and smooth with a mild nutty flavor. Golden Osetra has a buttery taste and Siberian Sturgeon has an earthy taste and firm texture.

Dietary Information
Different species and brands will vary. For general guidance:
Per 1 ounce (28.35g):
- Calories 75
- Fat 5.07g
- Saturated Fat 1.151g
- Protein 6.97g
- Sodium 425mg
- Selenium 18.6mcg
- Cholesterol 167mg
Source: USDA

Appearance
Caviar varies in color and size depending on the specific species. Golden Osetra eggs are a gold color, White Sturgeon eggs have a wide color variation from light brown or dark gray to olive or gold eggs, and Siberian Sturgeon has smaller eggs that are dark brown to black.

Form
Caviar is sold in jars and tins. Malossol is lightly salted caviar and considered to be the highest quality.

Uses

Preparation
Caviar is great for appetizers and can be added to sushi or pastas. It is good on bread, crackers or potato pancakes. It should be served cold and the container should be kept on ice while serving. As metal may impart a metallic flavor to Caviar, it is recommended to not use metal utensils but rather to use non-metallic utensils made of materials such as Mother of Pearl, shell, or plastic.

Substitution
Ikura (Salmon roe) and Lumpfish roe can substitute for Caviar.
Handling
Caviar should be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator at 28-32°F for maximum shelf life. Freezing will negatively affect the texture. Air and heat are caviar’s biggest enemies.

Market

Sizes and Cuts
White Sturgeon, Golden Osetra and Siberian Sturgeon Caviar are available in 1oz. jars. Sterling Classic and Sterling Royal Caviar are available by special order in 30g (1.058oz), 50g (6.764oz), 125g (4.409oz) and 250g (8.818oz) containers. Other imported Caviars are available on a special order basis.

Pricing Scale
Caviar is a luxury food. Domestic Farmed Caviar is a great value and alternative to high priced Caviar from the Caspian Sea. Pricing will vary by quality and brand. Due to market and currency fluctuations, please contact your Seattle Fish Company of New Mexico associate for up-to-date market information and current pricing information.

Shelf Life
Shelf life depends on the specific species but unopened containers will generally keep for 4 to 6 weeks if properly handled. Caviar should be consumed immediately after opening.

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<th>Market Names</th>
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<td>Caviar</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Where Caught</th>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. and Northern Hemisphere</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Caught</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm-raised with some wild-captured</td>
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