King Crab

There are many species of King Crab including, Red King Crab (Paralithodes camtschaticus), Blue King Crab (P. platypus), Golden King Crab (Lithodes aequispinus, formerly called brown king crab) and Hanasaki/King Crab (P. brevipes). Red King Crab is the largest species and makes up a majority of the King Crab available in the U.S. market. King Crab is found in the northern Pacific and the Bering Sea. It is wild-captured in Alaska and Eastern Russia. Southern Red Crab/Santolla Crab (L. santolla) is closely related and commercially fished in waters around Argentina.

King Crab has four pairs of legs: three pairs for walking and one pair of claws with a feeder claw on the left and a crusher (killer) claw on the right. It can live for ten to twenty years and young crabs between the ages of 2 and 4 form pods of thousands of crabs. Only male King Crab can be legally caught and sold. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood WATCH® rates trap-caught King Crab from the US as a “Good Alternative” because it “is currently well-managed.” King Crab from Russia is rated “Avoid” because Russian King Crab “stocks are at critically low levels, they’re illegally fished and overfished and management is highly ineffective.” In 2013, Russia started making steps to better enforce rules and try to limit illegal fishing. King Crab from Norway caught in the Barents Sea is rated "Best Choice" because "effective management practices prevent population growth and spreading of this invasive species."

Sources

**Species Name**
Paralithodes camtschaticus-Red King Crab | Paralithodes platypus-Blue King Crab | Lithodes aequispinus-Golden King Crab | Paralithodes brevipes-King Crab, Hanasaki

**Source**
King Crab can be found in the colder northern Pacific waters and tends to like shallow waters during the spring spawn and molt before moving into deeper waters during the winter. It is fished in Alaska and Russia.

**Seasonality**
Frozen King Crab is available year-round. The U.S. harvest occurs during fall and winter.

**Fishing Method**
King Crab is wild-captured by traps and crab pots.

Features
**Flavor**

King Crab has a delicate, sweet, rich flavor and flaky, tender, moist meat. The leg meat can be somewhat stringy and the body or shoulder meat is flakier in texture. The meat of King Crab is firmer and coarser than that of the Dungeness Crab.

**Dietary Information**

Per 100g raw portion:
- Calories 84
- Fat 0.60g
- Saturated Fat 0.09g
- Protein 18.29g
- Carbohydrate 0.0g
- Sodium 836mg
- Selenium 36.4mcg
- Cholesterol 42mg

Source: USDA Nutrient Database

**Appearance**

King Crab has spiny shells and spidery legs. It has 3 pairs of walking legs, a “killer” claw and a “feeder” claw. It can grow up to 25 pounds and 6ft leg span but on average weigh 5 to 10 pounds. When cooked, the shell of the leg is bright red. The meat is snow white and has hints of red.

**Form**

Most of the meat is found in the appendages and shoulders. Merus, the largest section of the leg, is the best and most expensive meat. The most common market form is the leg and claw, which is cut from clusters. Legs are available whole or split, split legs are cut to expose the meat of the crab making it easier to eat. Claws and other portions of crab are also available.

**Uses**

**Preparation**

King Crab is good hot or cold. As it is already cooked, be careful not to overcook when heating. To heat, broiling, barbecuing, microwaving, sautéing, simmering, stewing, baking, and steaming all work well. King Crab is also good added to bisques, salads, casseroles, chowders. Be sure to carefully thaw King Crab meat to prevent the meat from becoming watery and mushy.

**Substitution**

Other Crab species and Lobster can substitute for King Crab.

**Handling**

King Crab should be frozen until ready to use. Carefully defrost slowly in a refrigerator for about 24 hours to keep the meat from becoming watery. After thawing, it should be refrigerated at 30-34 degrees F.

**Market**
Sizes and Cuts
King Crab is available in sizes from 4-6 count per 10 pounds to 20/up count. It is available as legs & claws, split, clusters, scored claws, select portions, merus and meat only.

Pricing Scale
Pricing will vary depending on the country of origin and the specific specie of King Crab. Alaskan King Crab will have a premium over Russian. Red King Crab is generally considered to be higher quality than Brown/Gold(en) King Crab. 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
King Crab which has been handled and stored properly should retain optimum quality for 3-4 days. Frozen can be commercially stored for up to one year.

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<th>Market Names</th>
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<td>Paralithodes camtschaticus-Red</td>
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<td>King Crab, King Crab</td>
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<td>Paralithodes platypus-Blue King</td>
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<td>Crab, King Crab</td>
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<td>Paralithodes brevipes-King Crab,</td>
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<td>Hanasaki</td>
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<th>Where Caught</th>
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<td>Wild-capture by trap</td>
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