



North Atlantic Lobster



Lobsters are marine crustaceans that live along the Northeast Atlantic ocean floor from Labrador to Cape Hatteras in shallow coastal waters out beyond the continental shelf to depths of 2,300 feet. They are most abundant inshore to a depth of 130 feet from Maine to New Jersey. Available year round, supplies rely heavily on favorable weather as Lobsters are wild caught in traps along the ocean bottom.

Live North Atlantic Lobster is one of the most valuable fisheries in the United States, with landings of 81.8 million pounds in 2008. Maine, with landings of 63.4 million pounds, accounted for the majority of those landings for the 27th year in a row. The Canadian fishery added another 110 million pounds.

Known for its unique appearance and flavor, American Lobsters are enjoyed around the world. It takes about 6 years for a lobster to reach a weight of 1 pound. The largest Lobster on record weighted in at 44 pounds. North Atlantic Lobsters are wild caught.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood WATCH® rates Lobster trap-caught from the U.S. Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank and in Canada as "Good Alternative" and American Lobster from Southern New England as "Avoid." The Maine Lobster Trap Fishery and Canadian Lobster Fishery are certified sustainable against the standards of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). All MSC-certified fisheries, at a minimum, meet Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood WATCH®'s requirements for a "Good Alternative."

Sources



Species Name

Homarus americanus



Source

Lobsters dwell on the ocean floor in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean from Labrador to Cape Hatteras in shallow coastal waters out beyond the continental shelf to depths of 2,300 feet. They are most abundant inshore to a depth of 130 feet from Maine to New Jersey.



Seasonality

"New Caught" Lobsters are available year round, subject to weather and fishing conditions. Supplies during the winter, when weather conditions are at their worst, may come from shore side holding facilities. Quality and meat fills vary depending on the time of year. During the warmer summer months Lobsters "molt", shedding their shell and allowing them to grow into their new larger shell. In advance of molting, the meat inside its claws will diminish by as much as 75%.



Fishing Method

Lobsters are a Wild Capture Fishery caught in baited traps located on the ocean floor. Traps are attached to lines and set out on the ocean floor then hauled in to retrieve the catch. This method maintains the integrity of the ocean floor by minimizing disruption. Inshore traps may be set from just 30 feet to depths of over 300 feet.

Features



Flavor

Cooked Lobster meat has a firm texture and a sweet taste.



Dietary Information

Lobster is low in saturated fat and is a very good source of protein and selenium.

Per 3.5oz 100g cooked meat:

Calories 89

Fat 0.86g

Saturated Fat 0.208g

Carbohydrates 0g

Cholesterol 146mg

Selenium 73.1mcg

Sodium 486mg

Protein 19.0g

Source: USDA



Appearance

Lobsters have an exoskeleton that is typically dark green or brown. Although rare, some blue lobsters have been recorded.

When cooked the outer shell turns a bright red color, while the meat turns from translucent to snowy white.



Form

The greatest commercial value for Lobsters is from the sales of live product. Lobsters are exported live worldwide with the highest demand coming from Europe and Asia. Live North Atlantic Lobsters are shipped and sold live.

Processing plants, primarily in Canada, produce a variety of value added product forms which include, cooked whole, tails, meat and minced, as well as raw frozen tails.

Uses



Preparation

Lobsters are best when steamed or boiled, but can be baked or grilled or sautéed.



Substitution

The flavor of North Atlantic lobster is unique and as sweet as any Lobster available making it difficult to substitute. Other cold water spiny Lobster, which are actually members of the crawfish family or “Spiny Lobsters,” work nearly as well in most applications. For soups or stews, Monkfish is the best finfish substitute.



Handling

If and when possible, Lobsters should be stored live in a saltwater tank. Out of water they should be kept moist in a cool or refrigerated environment.

Market



Sizes and Cuts

Although North Atlantic Lobsters can grow to over twenty five pounds in the wild, they are generally sold live between one and ten pounds and graded:

Chicks 1# (1.0 to 1.2#)

Quarters 1 1/4# (1.2 to 1.40#)

Halves 1 1/2# (1.40 to 1.70#)

Deuces 2-3# (1.70 to 3.0#)

Threes 3-4# (3.0 to 4.0#)

4-6 (4.0 to 6.0#)

Jumbos 6# plus (6.0# to Up)

Culls - A live lobster missing a claw. Small, Medium & Large.



Pricing Scale

Live lobsters are available by pre-order only. Lobsters are considered a luxury item around the globe, and the Live North Atlantic Lobsters are some of the best in the world. Pricing generally hits a low point during the summer months when fishing is favorable and landings are high. During the winter months, when fishing becomes increasingly difficult and supplies decrease, the price can move up rapidly.



Shelf Life

Stored in a well maintained salt water tank, Lobsters can live up to three months. Out of water lobsters may survive 12 to 72 hours in a refrigerated cool damp environment.

Market Names
Canadian Lobster, Maine Lobster
Where Caught
Labrador, Canada to Cape Hatteras.
How Caught
Wild-captured in baited traps on the ocean floor. Traps may be set from just 30 feet to depths of over 300 feet. Although experimentation with aquaculture is ongoing, economic viability is in question.





+ Indicates some or all this fishery is certified as sustainable to the Marine Stewardship Council standard. [Learn More.](#)