



Masago - Capelin Roe



Masago is the roe, or eggs, of Capelin (*Mallotus villosus*). Capelin is a member of the Smelt family, *Osmeridae*. Capelin can be found the northern Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and is wild-captured in the North Atlantic Ocean. Historically, the Barents Sea north of Norway and Russia provided the largest fishery for Capelin but has been overfished and now Capelin is most commonly fished in Iceland and Canada. It is fished primarily for the roe. Masago is often used in sushi and as a garnish.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood WATCH® rates Capelin from Canada as a “Good Alternative” because of “uncertainties over capelin abundance.” Capelin from Iceland is not rated.

Sources



Species Name
Mallotus villosus



Source
Capelin lives in the north Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in a near circumpolar distribution. Most of the major fisheries are in the North Atlantic, including Newfoundland, Iceland and Norway. Iceland is currently the largest producer. Masago is often processed in Iceland and some may also be processed in Japan, Taiwan and China.



Seasonality
Year-round. Harvest and spawn occurs in winter.



Fishing Method
Capelin is wild-captured by purse seine and mid-water trawl. In Canada it is also caught by trap net. The eggs are then removed from the fish and processed.

Features



Flavor
Masago is slightly salty and similar in taste to Tobiko. It has a light, crunchy texture. There are some flavored varieties available which can often be distinguished by different colors.



Appearance

Masago is tiny and naturally orange-red in color. Masago is slightly smaller than Tobiko.

Uses



Preparation

Masago may be used in many different sushi recipes and as a topping or garnish.



Substitution

Tobiko or Golden Caviar may substitute for Masago.



Handling

Fresh Masago should be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator at 28-32F for maximum shelf life. Unlike Caviar, Masago holds up well frozen. Masago is best if kept frozen until ready to use as once thawed the shelf life is about 4 to 5 days.

Market



Pricing Scale

There is some variation in pricing due to quality. Lower priced masago typically has more moisture/water than the more expensive. 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

Masago which has been handled and stored properly should retain optimum quality for up to a week from date of harvest refrigerated and 1 year frozen.

Market Names
Masago, Capelin Roe, Smelt Roe
Where Caught
Iceland, Norway, Canada
How Caught
Wild-captured by purse seine, mid-water trawl and trapnet



