



Seafood Health Facts: Making Smart choices

Balancing the Benefits and Risks of Seafood Consumption

Resources for Healthcare Providers and Consumers

Lobster [1]

Types and Sources of Products

There are two distinct lobster fisheries in the United States, the American lobster off the coast of New England and Eastern Canada, and the spiny lobster in the Florida Keys. The American lobster fishery is one of the most valuable fisheries in the United States with an average total catch of approximately 90 to 100 million pounds worth up to \$400 million annually. In addition to U.S. lobster harvests, a large amount of northern lobsters are imported from Canada. The lobster's habitat is rocky areas from just below the surface to depths of 2,300 feet, although they are usually concentrated at depths of 130 feet. Lobsters molt as they age, and it is estimated the American lobster will molt over 20 times in 5 to 8 years before reaching the minimum size for commercial fishing.

The spiny lobster fishery lands approximately 4 to 6 million pounds annually with a value between \$20-40 million. Most of the spiny lobster sold in the U.S. is imported. These lobsters can be found in dense vegetation as juveniles and eventually migrate to coral reefs as adults. Like American lobsters, the spiny lobsters will molt about 25 times in the first 5 to 7 years of life. The minimum size for commercial and recreational fisheries is 3 inches.

The U.S. exports over 50 million pounds of lobster annually, with the main importer being Canada, followed by Italy, Spain and France. The U.S. and Canada are the major suppliers of lobster in the world. There is currently no aquaculture of lobsters, although feasibility studies have been done for both commercial species.

American Lobster

American lobster is also known as New England or Northern lobster.

Lobsters are found in colder waters off of the New England coast

The American lobster is one of the most valuable fisheries in the United States.

The Northern lobsters' lifespan is thought to exceed 50 years.

The largest American lobster on record weighed 44 pounds.

Spiny Lobster

Spiny lobster is also known as Caribbean lobster.

Spiny lobsters live in warm waters, and the main U.S. fishery is in the Florida Keys.

Frozen lobster tails in U.S. markets are usually spiny lobster.

Spiny lobsters can grow to 3 feet or more.

Product Forms

Lobster is sold mostly fresh or frozen as shell-on lobster tails, cooked meat or live whole lobsters. A small amount of lobster meat is canned.

Buyer Advice

As with any seafood product, one should purchase lobster and lobster meat from a reputable source that has high standards for quality and sanitation. Live lobster quality can decrease as it is stored in tanks, so it is best to buy from a source with a high volume of sales. Lobsters can be stored alive out of water in a moist environment for up to one day. The minimum weight for market lobster sales is 1-pound.

Nutrition

Both species of lobster are low in fat and a good source of protein. Like other marine crustaceans, lobsters are high in selenium and other minerals. For more information on the nutritional content of lobster, see the nutrition labels provided.

Management and Sustainability

Spiny lobster is found in the warmer waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The commercial fishery can be found throughout the Caribbean and the U.S fishery is mainly in the Florida Keys. This species is managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which includes waters 3-200 miles off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and East Florida to Key West; and by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. In the Caribbean the spiny lobster fishery is managed by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

Within 3 miles of shore, the American lobster is managed by the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission under the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. States implement management measures for lobster harvesting in their waters within 3 miles of the shore consistent with the recommendations of this management plan. In off-shore federal waters (3-200 miles) the northern lobster is managed under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act.

Both lobster fisheries use traps to catch lobster which have little impact on the environment and limited by-catch. Regulations have been put in place to reduce the number of 'ghost traps'. Ghost traps are lost gear that continues to capture fish and lobsters. Biodegradable hinges and escape panels are required on all lobster traps to reduce their occurrence. Other gear restrictions and regulations include trap size, gear marking requirements, and escape vent. Lobsters are also taken as by-catch in some trawl fisheries. Regulations are in place stating the minimum and maximum carapace length limits, protection of females, gear restrictions, trap limits, and several area-specific limited entry programs. The recreational fishery of spiny lobsters is done primarily by divers; which is allowed during a special 2-day period before commercial fishing begins.

References:

[NOAA FishWatch](#) [2]

National Marine Fisheries Service, 2011, [Fisheries of the United States, 2010](#). [3]

Sidebar Image:

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 oz (85g)
Northern Lobster, cooked moist heat

Amount Per Serving

Calories 80 **Calories from Fat 5**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0.5g **1%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 125mg **42%**

Sodium 410mg **17%**

Total Carbohydrate 0g **0%**

Dietary Fiber 0g **0%**

Sugars 0g

Protein 16g

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 8% • Iron 2%

Vitamin D 0% • Selenium 90%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 oz (85g)
Spiny Lobster, cooked moist heat

Amount Per Serving

Calories 120 **Calories from Fat 15**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 1.5g **2%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 75mg **25%**

Sodium 190mg **8%**

Total Carbohydrate 0g **0%**

Dietary Fiber 0g **0%**

Sugars 0g

Protein 22g

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 4%

Calcium 6% • Iron 6%

Selenium 70%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
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[2] <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/>

[3] <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/fus/fus10/index.html>