



Seafood Health Facts: Making Smart choices

Balancing the Benefits and Risks of Seafood Consumption

Resources for Healthcare Providers and Consumers

Canned Tuna [1]

Types and Sources of Products

The canned tuna industry is over 100 years old. Tuna canning began in the early 1900s to produce a substitute for canned sardines, and canned tuna quickly grew into one of the most popular seafood products in the United States. About 300 million pounds of canned tuna is imported into the U.S. from other countries each year. The major suppliers of canned tuna to the U.S include Thailand, Philippines, Ecuador, Vietnam and Indonesia. The 5 main commercial tuna species are described below.

Albacore Tuna

Primarily sold in canned tuna as 'white' tuna meat.

Most of the canned albacore is caught in the open waters of the Pacific.

Pacific Albacore can live up to 12 years and can grow to 80 pounds in the open ocean.

U.S. caught albacore is primarily from the Pacific Coast but it is also caught in the Atlantic Ocean. It can be sold as fresh packed canned tuna or in loins.

Skipjack Tuna

Primarily sold as canned tuna and labeled as 'light' tuna.

Almost all of the global harvest of Pacific skipjack tuna comes from the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

The majority of fresh and frozen skipjack tuna sold in the U.S. is imported from Mexico, South Korea and Ecuador.

Pacific Skipjack Tuna grow up to nearly 4 feet and more than 70 pounds.

Yellowfin Tuna

Yellowfin is often marketed as frozen tuna steaks or fresh loins or steaks.

A small amount is canned as 'light' tuna meat mixed with skipjack.

Pacific Yellowfin Tuna can grow up to 400 lbs and have a relatively short lifespan of 6 to 7 years.

Bigeye Tuna

Bigeye look similar to Yellowfin, but the bigeye's eyes are larger than the yellowfin's and their finlets have black edges .

Pacific Bigeye Tuna can grow to 6.5 feet long and live up to 8 years.

Bigeye is frequently served in sashimi or sushi dishes or as fresh or frozen steaks or loins.

Bluefin Tuna

Pacific Bluefin tuna is the highest valued Atlantic tuna species in the market with individual fish reaching three million dollars at auction.

Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna can live up to 20 years and can produce up to 10 million eggs per year.

Bluefin is used almost exclusively in sashimi or sushi dishes.

Product Forms

The canned tuna sold in supermarkets or in foodservice outlets, delis, or in tuna sandwiches is either albacore

or a mixture of skipjack and yellowfin tuna. "Light tuna" which consists mostly of skipjack and small amounts of yellowfin is the less expensive product and represents the largest portion of canned tuna sales in the U.S. Albacore tuna is the only species authorized to be labeled 'white meat tuna' in the United States. Fresh or frozen tuna loins or steaks sold in retail stores and restaurants are generally yellowfin, bigeye, or albacore tuna. High quality or "sushi grade" bigeye and bluefin tuna are delicacies that are usually used in sushi and sashimi dishes.

Nutrition

Canned tuna is a good source of essential nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, high quality protein, selenium and Vitamin D. Most tuna species have approximately 2 grams of fat per 113 gram portion and less than 45 milligrams of cholesterol and sodium. Tuna also provides an important dietary source of the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids needed for good heart health, brain function and normal growth and development. Albacore and bluefin tuna have the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids followed by skipjack and yellowfin. The canning process creates a convenient, nutritious product with a long shelf-life that is a good source of protein and other nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids. The nutritional composition of canned tuna products is influenced by the liquid (oil or water) that it is packed in and whether or not other ingredients such as salt are added. Nutritional labels provide a basis to compare these products.

Management and Sustainability

As a highly migratory fish, tuna can travel thousands of miles in their lifetime, making it an accessible fishery for many nations around the globe. Highly migratory species require international cooperation for fishery management. The U.S. is a member of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) as well as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Both organizations have been created to conserve and manage tuna fisheries in the Pacific Ocean. Pacific albacore tuna caught along the U.S. Pacific coast recently received sustainability certification through the Marine Stewardship Council. In the Atlantic Ocean the U.S. is a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. The U.S. domestic fishery is managed by the NOAA Fisheries Service Highly Migratory Species Management Division.

References:

National Marine Fisheries Service,
2018. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/fisheries-united-states-2017-report> [2]. [3]

[NOAA FishWatch](#) [4]

Sidebar Image:

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 oz (85g)
Light Tuna, canned in water, drained

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 5
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 25mg	8%
Sodium 290mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 22g	

Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	•	Iron 8%
Vitamin D 40%	•	Selenium 100%

*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)
White Tuna, canned in water, drained

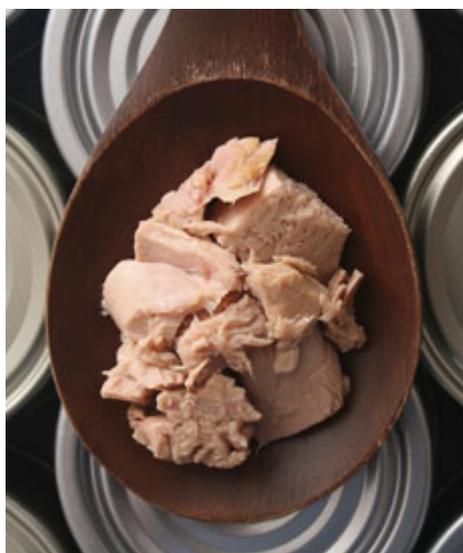
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 25
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2.5g	4%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 35mg	12%
Sodium 320mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 20g	

Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2%	•	Iron 4%
Vitamin D 15%	•	Selenium 80%

*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
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Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4





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- [1] <https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood-choices/description-top-commercial-seafood-items/canned-tuna>
- [2] <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/fisheries-united-states-2017-report>
- [3] <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/fus/fus10/index.html>
- [4] <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/>