



Seafood Health Facts: Making Smart choices

Balancing the Benefits and Risks of Seafood Consumption

Resources for Healthcare Providers and Consumers

Catfish [1]

Types and Sources of Products

Farm raised domestic catfish has been one the top ten most frequently consumed seafood products in the U.S. for almost 20 years. Consumption levels over the past decade have been around 1 pound per person each year.

In the United States, the term catfish refers to the popular farm raised variety known as channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) native to the Southeastern states. These catfish are grown on farms located in the southeast, primarily in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Farm raised U.S. catfish are different from catfish species that live in the wild, and from various other catfish species that are imported from other parts of the world.

Catfish is the leading aquaculture produced seafood product in the U.S. The annual harvest of farm raised catfish in the U.S. is at least twice as much as the annual aquaculture production of all other species of fish and shellfish combined. Annual production over the past decade has ranged from about 500 to 650 million pounds. Catfish are grown in controlled ponds using special formulated feeds based on natural grains. On average, it takes approximately 18 months for catfish to grow to a harvestable size. During this period the fish receive constant attention, and water quality, growth rates, and health are monitored. Production is controlled and staggered to assure that fresh and frozen catfish products are available throughout the year.

Product Forms and Buyer Advice

Farm raised catfish is available in a variety of different forms. **Whole** fish that have been eviscerated (gutted) and headed with or without the skin intact are available in most markets. **Fillets** are cut to be skinless and boneless and do not contain the small pinbones found in many other fish. Smaller portions including **nuggets, strips or chunks** are cut from the whole fish or fillets. All product forms are available as fresh, refrigerated, or frozen raw fish or as products that may include breading, flavorings or other ingredients.

Domestically grown catfish should be identified as a farm raised product of the United States or a specific U.S. state. Imported catfish should be identified by the country of origin and the accepted market name for the species of catfish being sold. For example, the catfish species commonly raised in Vietnam should be called Basa, Swai, or Tra to distinguish it from the U.S. farm raised catfish whose acceptable market name is Catfish.

The edible meat of catfish (raw or cooked) should be free of any objectionable aromas or off-flavors. The raw odor is best described as neutral or mild. Some aromatic descriptions, best noted in the cooked form, are nutty, buttery, chick-like, and grain-like (corn). Off-odors or flavors in some catfish have been associated with the conditions of the growing waters (algae-like, woody and musty). Domestic catfish are subject to inspection by the USDA, and quality control procedures and sensory monitoring are used to assure a high quality product with uniform mild and neutral aroma and taste prior to harvest and market distribution.

Nutritional Information

Catfish is a moderately fatty fish that is also a good source of high quality protein. A nutrition label for a 3 ounce cooked portion of catfish is provided. Nutrient levels can be affected by the ingredients and cooking method used to prepare catfish fillets.

Sustainability and Management

Farmed production of domestic catfish exceeds demand such that additional production is possible and sustainable. Production concerns involve available feeds and production costs, but significant research is investigating options for continued and sustainable catfish aquaculture in the United States.

References

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

[USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference](#) [3]

Sidebar Image:



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz (85g) Channel Catfish, farmed, cooked dry heat	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 50
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 6g	9%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 100mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 16g	
Vitamin A 0%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	• Iron 2%
Vitamin D 2%	• Selenium 10%
*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	



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