



Catfish



Catfish are the largest aquaculture industry in the United States. Worldwide, there are more than 2,000 species of catfish. Channel catfish and Blue catfish are the most commonly raised and consumed species in the United States.

Catfish are slender with a flat underside and forked tail. They do not have scales or incisors (cutting teeth). They feed through suction or gulping. Catfish are fed pellets that contain soybean meal, corn, rice, and fish meal. The pellets float on the surface of the water.

U.S. farm-raised catfish are grown in freshwater, clay-based ponds that are environmentally controlled. Mississippi produces over 50% of U.S.-grown catfish. Together, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi produce 94% of the farm-raised catfish in the United States.

Mature breeding catfish produce 3,000-4,000 eggs a year and remain in production for 4-6 years. The fertilized eggs are taken to hatcheries where they hatch after seven days. They are then moved into special ponds where they grow into fingerlings (the size of an index finger). When the fingerlings are 4-6 inches long, they are moved to a new pond where they grow for about 2 years.

The catfish are harvested when they are about 1.7 pounds each. Seines (large, weighted nets) are used to harvest the catfish which are transferred to aerated tank trucks to be transported to processing plants. After harvesting, the catfish are cleaned, processed, and frozen to a temperature of -40°F. The catfish can be sold as whole fish, steaks, filets, strips, and nuggets, marinated and breaded, or precooked in frozen dinners.

Catfish are low in calories and a good source of lean protein, healthy fats, and essential nutrients including B vitamins, omega-3, and omega-6. Eating catfish can benefit heart, brain, eye, and bone health.

Catfish can be consumed fried, grilled, steamed, poached, smoked, or added to soups, stews, or curries.



<https://youtu.be/GQlkoN2YMdo?si=RSz9pvvJR3135yEC>