



# Oysters



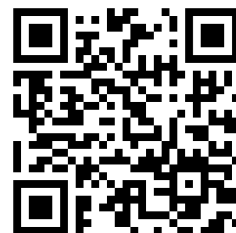
Oysters are a type of mollusk and popular shellfish, valued for their unique flavor and texture. There are five primary species of oysters consumed worldwide—Pacific oysters, Atlantic or Eastern oysters, European flat oysters, Kumamoto oysters, and Olympia oysters. The Atlantic (Eastern) and Pacific oysters are the most popular species produced in the United States. The Atlantic (Eastern) oyster is found primarily in the Gulf Coast and Chesapeake Bay regions and makes up about 75% of the total U.S. harvest. Virginia, Washington, Louisiana, California, Massachusetts, Alabama, and Oregon are the top oyster-producing states.

Oysters are bred in a hatchery. The eggs develop into free-swimming larvae that feed on microscopic algae provided by the hatchery. After 2-3 weeks, after developing a tiny shell, they are placed in mesh bags, cages, or tanks with a substrate (shells from other oysters or synthetic materials) known as a cultch and feed on plankton in the water. As the oysters grow larger, they are transferred to estuaries, bays, or shallow coastal waters where they are either grown directly on the seafloor (bottom culture) or in suspended systems like floating cages, racks, or baskets. They consume plankton and other nutrients naturally found in the water and do not require external feeding.

Once the oysters reach market size (within 18-36 months), they are harvested at low tide using techniques like hand harvesting, raking, using tongs, or dredging. After harvesting, the oysters are cleaned, sorted by size, and prepared for market distribution.

Oysters are high in protein and low in calories. They are a good source of zinc, iron, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, and selenium. Oysters are rich in B vitamins, especially vitamin B12, and provide omega-3 fatty acids.

Oysters are eaten raw or cooked. They can be grilled, roasted, fried, steamed, poached, smoked, baked, or canned. Oysters can be served as appetizers, in seafood platters or ceviche, or used in po'boy sandwiches, stews, and soups.



<https://youtu.be/PEdSGBMcjE0?si=ZTDoceZe1ZbzuTc7>