

Description: Atlantic salmon is a silver-skinned fish with distinct dark blue-green, cross-like spots over the body and head, and above the lateral line. The underside of the fish is nearly all white and its flesh colour ranges from pink to deep orange. Farmed Atlantic salmon are commonly available on the market weighing between 3.5 kg (8 lbs) and 4.5 kg (10 lbs). The flesh of farmed Atlantic salmon is firm, moist, oily and has a large moist flake. Its flavour is delicate.

While Atlantic salmon is the most common farmed salmon species in British Columbia accounting for 80% of BC's farmed salmon production, other species include Chinook (Pacific King) and Pacific Coho.

Product Forms: Farmed Atlantic salmon is available fresh in a variety of forms including whole dressed, steaked, filleted and portioned. The 2 latter products can usually also be obtained with the bones and/or skin removed. While most product forms are sold as fresh, they are also available frozen and smoked. A small amount of farmed salmon is also now canned.

Availability: Farmed salmon is available fresh, frozen and smoked year round.

Buying Tips: When buying Atlantic salmon ensure that: the skin is shiny and bright with no scrapes or scars; the scales are intact; the eyes are bright; the gills are bright pink-red and not slimy; the body is firm (the flesh should spring back when pressed lightly), and; the flesh is a uniform colour throughout. When buying fillets and steaks, look for firm, elastic flesh and a mild aroma.

Storing Tips: Because of its high oil-content, Atlantic salmon can turn rancid quickly if not properly stored. Rinse whole dressed salmon in ice water and pat dry before storing, but do not rinse cut portions. Chill fresh product to 0° C (32° F) immediately. Chilled product has a shelf life of approximately 10 days; however, for best results use within 2 days.

Salmon will stay fresh in the freezer for 3 to 5 months. If serving salmon raw, be sure to freeze it to -20° C (-4° F) for at least 24 hours before serving.

Preparation/Usage: Atlantic salmon can be prepared in many ways including baked, broiled, poached or grilled. To avoid overcooking, measure the thickest section of the salmon and cook for 10 to 12 minutes per 2.5 cm (1 inch) at 230° C (450° F). The salmon is cooked when the flesh loses its translucency and becomes opaque. Avoid using accompanying flavours that overpower the delicate flavour of the fish.

Area of Origin and Range of Availability: Atlantic salmon is farmed in North America, South America, Australia and Europe. Salmon farms in British Columbia are predominantly located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, although others are situated along the west and south coasts of Vancouver Island.

Harvest Volume: Canada is the fourth largest producer of farmed salmon in the world, following Norway, Chile and the United Kingdom. Landed volumes of farmed salmon in British Columbia rose dramatically during the 1990s with production having more than doubled in the last 5 years. Approximately 52,600 metric tonnes of farmed Atlantic salmon were harvested in the year 2001.

Cultivation Method: The salmon farming operation begins when salmon eggs are collected in the late fall and incubated in fresh water. In the late winter or early spring, they hatch as sac fry and are kept in tanks designed for feeding. In the late spring, they are graded for uniformity and size and transferred to rearing tanks where they feed throughout the summer. Once the salmon smolts have reached a weight of about 60 grams (2 ounces) and are strong enough to survive in the ocean, they are transported to saltwater and placed in sea cages which are net enclosures

supported by floating frames made of plastic or steel. There they are fed a mixture of fishmeal, fish oil, grains, minerals and vitamins until they reach market size. It takes approximately 30 months after hatching for a salmon to reach market size.

Processing Method: Farmed salmon are either brought live to the processing plant in harvest vessels, or they are harvested and iced at the salmon farms and then delivered to the processing plant hours later. Most farmed salmon are shipped to the market within 24 hours of being harvested.

Markets: Approximately 80% of British Columbia farmed salmon is exported outside of Canada, with the majority of international shipments going to markets in the United States. Other export markets include Japan, Taiwan and Korea.

Sustainability: The British Columbian salmon farming industry continues to take precautionary measures to address the impact that salmon farms may have on the environment by: working with First Nations and government to monitor streams for the presence of Atlantic salmon; implementing numerous on-farm measures to reduce salmon escapes, and; researching technologies that could one day eliminate all escapes. In addition, a range of other environmental issues relating to salmon farming has been extensively studied. British Columbian salmon farms operate under strict environmental regulations and are subject to continual monitoring and inspections.

In 2001 the BC Salmon Farmers Association (BCSFA) voluntarily implemented a Code of Practice. This Code of Practice guides the operations of BCSFA members in order to protect the safety and environmental sustainability of British Columbia's natural environment and salmon stocks.

After over a decade of review and assessment, provincial and federal governments have been persuaded by the industry's safe environmental record to licence new sites in British Columbia.

Historical and Anecdotal Information: Salmon has been farmed in Pacific waters since 1987, although the industry did not take off until the 1990s when harvests increased over 300% in a decade. Approximately 80% of farmed salmon in British Columbia is Atlantic salmon, although Chinook and Coho are also farmed. The industry operates on an area roughly one-sixth the size of Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Per 3.5 oz/100 grams of raw edible portion

Calories	183
Total fat	10.85 g
Saturated fat	2.18 g
Protein	19.90 g
Cholesterol	59.0 mg
Sodium	59.0 mg

Source: USDA