

**Description:** Sockeye has speckles on its deep blue-green back and silver sides. Its small-flaked flesh is the most intensely red of the 5 Pacific salmon species. Whole sockeye have an average weight of approximately 2.7 kg (6 lbs), but can range between 1 kg (2 lbs) and 4 kg (9 lbs). The high fat content of sockeye imparts an intense rich flavour to its firm textured flesh.

**Product Forms:** Wild sockeye is sold fresh or frozen in the usual product forms: whole, dressed, steaks and fillets. It is also canned, smoked and processed into value-added products such as burgers and patties. Sockeye roe (sujiko) is produced for the Japanese market.

**Availability:** Generally, sockeye is available fresh from June to the end of August; frozen from September to May, and; canned or smoked throughout the year.

**Buying Tips:** When selecting a fresh salmon make sure the eyes are bright and clear and its skin shiny with tightly adhering scales. Fresh salmon has only a faint, ocean-fresh aroma. Its flesh should be firm to the touch and bounce quickly back into shape when gently pressed. When selecting fillets and steaks look for firm, moist, translucent flesh.

**Storing Tips:** Keep it clean, keep it cold and handle it with care. Fresh salmon should be kept well-chilled at a temperature around 0°C (32°F). While it's best to purchase salmon on the day you plan to serve it, you can refrigerate fresh salmon up to 2 days. Rinse gently in cold water; pat dry; then wrap tightly in plastic wrap. If purchased frozen, keep salmon at a constant temperature of -18°C (0°F) or colder. Do not re-freeze if it has been allowed to partially thaw.

**Preparation/Usage:** Sockeye lends itself to any culinary treatment, either moist or dry, retaining its distinctive colour when cooked. To cook salmon perfectly, follow the "Canadian Rule": 10 minutes of cooking per 2.5 cm (1 inch) of thickness. Measure at its thickest point (its depth not its width), including stuffing if used. It's done when flesh is opaque and separates into moist sections when firmly prodded with a fork at its thickest part.

**Area of Origin and Range of Availability:** Beginning its four-year life cycle in our cold clean streams and rivers, British Columbia's sockeye salmon then migrate to the Pacific Ocean where they range the furthest of all Pacific salmon species before finally returning to their rivers to spawn. Sockeye is harvested along the length of British Columbia's coast, and off Alaska and Russia.

**Harvest Volume:** During the five-year period, 1996 to 2000, annual harvests of sockeye ranged between 2,000 and 25,000 tonnes.

**Harvest Method:** The commercial salmon fishing fleet is comprised of troll, seine and gillnet gear types, all of which harvest sockeye. The trolling method of hooks and lines uses different lures depending on the salmon species being sought. Seiners use large nets to encircle the fish, which are then drawn together into a "purse" so that the fish cannot escape. Gillnetters, the smallest vessels of the fleet, stay close to shore with their nets in tow behind them. The way the nets are suspended, and the choice of mesh size allow the selective targeting of certain species and sizes of fish. In the past, much of the sockeye harvested by fish. In the past, much of the sockeye harvested by the net fleet was destined for canned production. Today, using advanced quality techniques, the net fleet has the capability to deliver quality fresh sockeye suitable for the food service sector.

**Processing Method:** By adhering to strict grading and handling methods, both on-board and at federally registered fish processing plants, British Columbia's commercial fishing industry can guarantee delivery of top quality salmon whether fresh, frozen, smoked or canned. Some of the fleet, especially trollers, is equipped to produce premium FAS (frozen-at-sea) sockeye. In this process, the salmon is bled and dressed as quickly as possible after being caught. It is then

immediately glazed (a thin coat of ice achieved by dipping the frozen fish several times in fresh, cold water)—sealing air away from the fish—and finally quick frozen. This process captures the fresh-caught flavour while preserving the fish's firm texture and rich colour.

**Markets:** While in season, fresh sockeye is available to local markets, with the bulk of the catch, over 90%, destined for export markets as frozen or canned product. On average, over 95% of British Columbia's annual frozen sockeye exports go to Japan, while the United Kingdom is the major customer of canned sockeye, purchasing on average, 80% of the total sockeye export pack each year.

**Sustainability:** The commercial salmon fishing fleet is strictly controlled on where, when and how they fish. It employs selective harvesting techniques which, in conjunction with close monitoring of run size and catches, allow for optimum escapement levels, that is the number of salmon returning to spawn. This conservation-based fisheries management regime permits the controlled harvest of more abundant wild salmon stocks while protecting weaker ones as they rebuild.

**Historical and Anecdotal Information:** Sockeye has always been an integral part of British Columbia's First Nations traditions. The esteem in which they hold this species is reflected in the name itself: sockeye is derived from the First Nations' word for chief, "Sau-kai". British Columbians have long valued sockeye as an important BC resource. First commercially canned in 1870, canneries quickly sprang up all along British Columbia's coast and the tradition of canned sockeye exports to the United Kingdom began.

## NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Per 3.5 oz/100 grams of raw edible portion

<b>Calories</b>	168
<b>Total fat</b>	8.56 g
<b>Saturated fat</b>	1.50 g
<b>Protein</b>	21.30 g
<b>Cholesterol</b>	62.0 mg
<b>Sodium</b>	47.0 mg

Source: USDA