

Description: Ocean-caught chums have a dark metallic blue-green back becoming silver on the sides and belly. As they mature and approach fresh water they can be distinguished by the watermarks (dark vertical bars) that appear on their sides. Their flesh colour is reddish-pink though it fades as the watermarks appear. Whole chum salmon have an average weight of approximately 3.5 kg (8 lbs), but can range between 2 kg (4 lbs) and 9 kg (20 lbs). It has a mild, less full-bodied flavour and firm flesh with a slightly drier texture due to its low fat content.

Product Forms: Wild chum is sold fresh or frozen in the usual product forms: whole, dressed, steaks, chunks or “roasts” (headed, gutted, tailed). Chum is often used in value-added products such as burgers or patties and often appears under the name “keta” when canned. Chum roe is produced for the Japanese market.

Availability: Generally chum is available fresh during the period from July through November. The majority of the annual catch is frozen.

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: Chum is best suited to cooking methods such as poaching and steaming, or any method where added moisture is provided. However, its firm flesh also makes it an excellent candidate for grilling as long as it is marinated to provide extra moisture. 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: Wild chum salmon are found in the Pacific from northern California to the Yukon. They are found as far north as the Bering Sea and are also in abundance in the coastal waters off Japan.

Harvest Volume: During the five-year period, 1996 to 2000, annual harvests of chum ranged between 3,000 and 20,000 tonnes.

Harvest Method: The commercial salmon fishing fleet is comprised of troll, seine and gillnet gear types with seiners and gillnetters harvesting most of the annual chum catch. 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. The trolling method of hooks and lines uses different lures depending on the salmon species being sought. Most of the chum harvest occurs in the fall.

Processing Method: By adhering to strict grading and handling methods both on-board and at the processing plant, British Columbia's commercial fishing industry can guarantee delivery of top quality salmon whether fresh, frozen, smoked or canned. Small volumes of troll-caught chum salmon are processed at sea; often carefully handled and FAS (frozen-at-sea). 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 its texture and colour.

Markets: Usually plentiful supplies of fresh chum are available locally during its summer harvest season. The United States is the major importer of both fresh and frozen Canadian chum taking nearly all of annual fresh chum exports and nearly half of annual frozen chum exports.

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: Chum feeds on more "ocean jellies" than other Pacific salmon resulting in a lower fat content and a flavour distinctive from the other Pacific salmon species. Its flavour often appeals to those seeking a milder salmon taste. "Silver-bright" is the quality grade designation for premium, ocean-run chum; the skin on this fish is shiny silver. The grade designations "semi-bright" and "dark" describe chum as they mature and watermarks on their skin become more pronounced.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Per 3.5 oz/100 grams of raw edible portion

Calories	126
Total fat	3.7 g
Saturated fat	0.99 g
Protein	23.1 g
Cholesterol	38.0 mg
Sodium	92.7 mg
Omega-3 Fatty Acids	0.81 g

Source: Fisheries Council of British Columbia