



Oysters: *Crassostrea virginica*

Market Forms:.....Live in shell, fresh shucked (in 8 oz., 12 oz., pints, quarts, 1/2 gallons, gallons and poly bags), frozen (breaded and unbreaded) and frozen half shell. Freezing kills much of the surface bacteria and provides a longer shelf life with very little loss of quality for up to a year.

Size:Market size is approximately 3 inches for oysters in the shell. Shucked oysters are designated according to size ranging from the largest “counts” to “smallest” standards.
standard 240 to 400 meats/gallon
select 190 to 239 meats/gallon
extra select 160 to 189 meats/gallon
countunder 160 meats/gallon

Taste/Texture:.....Plump, delicate, tender, slightly salty. Oysters take on the flavor of their environment thus you see James River Oysters, Chincoteague Oysters, Rappahannock River.

Seasonality:Available year round.

Nutritional Value:69 Calories (100 grams, 3.5 oz.)
7.1% Protein
2.5% Fat
.44% Omega-3

Substitutability:Nothing else tastes quite like *Crassostrea virginica*, so named because biologists first identified it on Virginia's shores.

Folklore:Oysters have been evident throughout American history. English and Dutch colonists in America found the New World a paradise of oysters and were taught to catch and prepare them by the Indians. The process of tonging they learned from the Indians was similar to the process still used today on the Chesapeake Bay. And this knowledge of how to tong for oysters probably helped the pilgrims through their first hard winters.

Harvesting:Oysters are traditionally harvested in Virginia by day boats using hand tongs and the more up-to-date (i.e., mechanized) patent tongs and dredges.

Safety/Quality:Virginia's waters and products are regulated by federal and state agencies including the FDA, the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, insuring that only safe wholesome seafood reaches our customers.