

PACIFIC OYSTER

LATIN NAME: Crassostrea gigas

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Japanese Oyster, Giant Oyster



DESCRIPTION: Pacific oysters are large, fast-growing, cupped oysters with deep, elongated, thick and rough shells. The shell colour ranges from muddy brown to light gray and contains some purple streaks and spots. The meat is creamy white with a dark fringe around the mantle at times, although the colour of the meat as well as the shell can vary by region and season. While the oyster can grow to over 30 cm (12 inches) it is normally harvested at 15 cm (6 inches) or less. The mild, sweet flavour of live Pacific oysters is highly valued. The texture is firm and plump.

PRODUCT FORMS: Oysters are predominantly available live-in-shell, although fresh shucked meats, in-shell-frozen, frozen meats and smoked meats may also be available.

AVAILABILITY: Oysters are harvested year-round and accordingly are available throughout the year. However, they are particularly best raw during the fall and winter months because they spawn in the summer months and as a result become softer and more fatty during this time.

BUYING TIPS: When buying live oysters, ensure their shells are hard and closed. Open shells should close tightly when tapped. If they don't close, they are dead and should be avoided since bacteria multiply very quickly in dead shellfish, making them dangerous to eat.

Fresh shucked oysters should be plump, have good colour, smell fresh and be packaged in clear oyster liquid. Overall, oysters should also have a natural sea smell and should be avoided if they smell sulphurous or feel slimy.

STORING TIPS: Live oysters should be stored in a refrigerator cup-side down and covered with a damp towel. Live oysters need to breathe and therefore will not survive when stored in buckets of water, plastic bags or airtight containers. Store both live and fresh oysters in the refrigerator at 0°C (32°F) to 10°C (50°F).

Refrigerate shucked oysters in their liquor (oyster juices). Properly refrigerated oysters will stay alive up to 7 days after being harvested.

PREPARATION/USAGE: The sooner Pacific oysters are used, the better they will taste. Oysters are particularly popular served raw on the half-shell.

Frozen oysters should be thawed in the refrigerator and once thawed, they should not be refrozen.

Oysters in the shell can be served raw, baked, steamed, grilled or in specialty dishes such as Oysters Rockefeller. Shucked Pacific oysters can be served raw, sautéed, steamed, grilled, or used in soups and stews or other specialty dishes.

Pacific oysters require very little cooking time and should be heated slowly to avoid them turning to rubber. Regardless of the cooking method used, they are done when the mantle starts to curl.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS:

Per 100 grams (3.5 oz) of raw edible portion

Calories	81
Total Fat	2.3 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
Protein	9.5 g
Cholesterol	50.0 mg
Sodium	106.0 mg

SOURCE: USDA

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND A LIST OF CURRENT PRODUCT SUPPLIERS, CONTACT:

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