

WILD ALASKA *vs.* FARMED SALMON

A HELPFUL GUIDE



WHAT SETS WILD SALMON APART *from the farmed alternative?*
Learn about the distinctions between wild Alaska salmon and farmed salmon.

WILD ALASKA SALMON

Wild Alaska salmon refers to the five species of Pacific salmon that are native to Alaska. Sockeye, coho, chinook, pink and keta salmon all live, breed and thrive in their natural ecosystems of lakes, rivers, streams and the ocean. Alaska is known for its abundant, sustainably managed, high-quality salmon fisheries, and it's one of the world's largest natural producers of wild-caught salmon.

FARMED SALMON

Farmed salmon are grown in artificially controlled environments, commonly known as fish farms or fish pens. These enclosures mimic certain aspects of the salmon's natural habitat while providing increased control over their living conditions, diet, and growth cycles. The aim is to optimize conditions for rapid, efficient, and profitable production. Atlantic salmon is the most commonly farmed species. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Only farm-raised Atlantic salmon are found in U.S. seafood markets and commercial fishing for Atlantic salmon in the United States is prohibited."

GET *Wild* WITH ALASKA SALMON →

Wild vs Farmed

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS (DHA, EPA, ALA)

Lower fat content; higher ratio of omega-3 to omega-6.

Higher saturated fat; higher in omega-3s.

VITAMIN AND MINERAL CONTENT

High in minerals like potassium, zinc and calcium, as well as vitamin A, D and B12.

Depending on additives and specific feeding variations per brand, some farmed salmon is higher in vitamins A and D compared to wild.

CALORIES AND FAT

Leaner, lower in calories.

Higher saturated fat and calories.

ANTIBIOTICS AND PESTICIDES

No exposure.

Used to prevent disease and treat parasites.

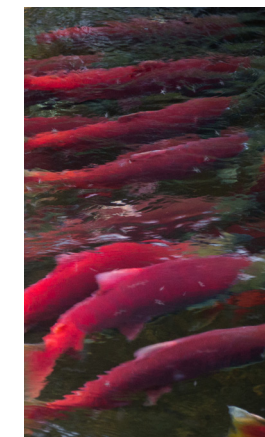
ANTIOXIDANTS

Astaxanthin is an antioxidant that wild salmon gain based on salmon's natural diet of zooplankton, shrimp, herring, and krill. It supports healthy heart, brain, vision, skin, joints, gut and bones.

Contains synthetic astaxanthin for coloring.

FLAVOR & TEXTURE

COLOR	Bright shades of red and orange resulting from a diet of rich, naturally occurring astaxanthin.	Naturally gray; the pink hue in Atlantic salmon is a byproduct of supplements added to the fish's diet.
FLAVOR	Deep and rich, with mildly sweet undertones and fresh taste. Offers flavor complexity from varied natural diets and migrations.	Milder, more bland and often oilier. Taste influenced by controlled feed and environment.
TEXTURE	Wild salmon are more active because they migrate through rivers and oceans. This activity influences muscle development and fat distribution, causing the meat's taste and texture to be naturally flaky and buttery.	Less flaky due to the thick fat bands between muscle segments.
AFTERTASTE	Clean without lingering off-flavors.	Can have a muddy or off note, depending on water quality and feed.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

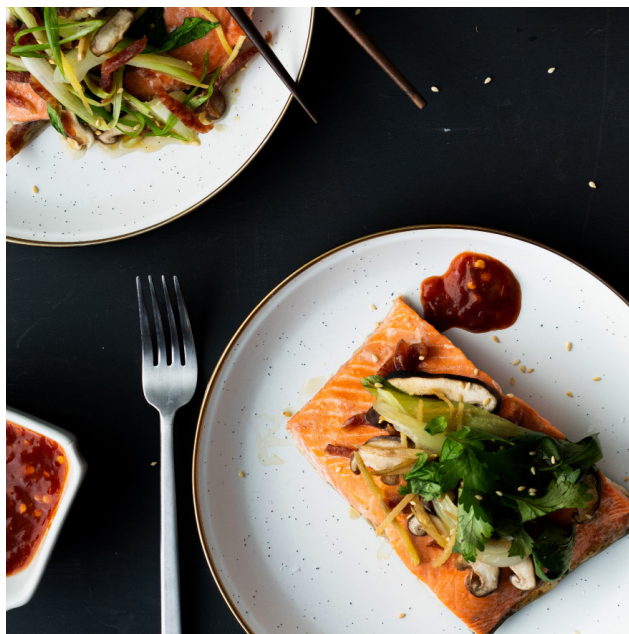
Wild Alaska salmon are sustainably harvested from regulated fisheries to ensure the continued health of salmon populations. Wild Alaska salmon are actively studied and managed. Wild salmon populations are prioritized to support the ecological, environmental, and social importance so that people can continue to eat wild Alaska salmon for generations. Buying wild Alaska salmon supports a sustainable future.

Fish farms can pose adverse impacts on ocean environments. A heavily populated fish pen resembles livestock feedlots for cows and pigs. The waste produced by farmed salmon can damage surrounding ecosystems. Storms can damage the pens, releasing farmed salmon that might interbreed with wild Atlantic salmon, reducing biodiversity, and potentially transmitting diseases to wild populations.

SUPPORT THE U.S. ECONOMY

Every wild Alaska salmon is harvested by an independently owned small vessel employing up to 5 people. Alaska's wild seafood industry is integral to the economic fabric of the state and the broader U.S. This industry weaves together the vital collaboration of fishermen, processors, shipyard workers, transporters, foodservice employees and retailers. The bountiful seafood from Alaska ensures unparalleled livelihood opportunities and support of local communities and food stability for not just Alaskans and Americans, but countless individuals globally.

Production and revenue are on the rise for farmed salmon in the U.S., but the consequences of the increased production are dire in terms of environmental impact.



BUYING WILD SALMON

When purchasing Alaska salmon, look for the terms “wild” or “Alaska” in the name. These terms are only used to describe Pacific salmon species. Look for the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) or Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications, which certify wild-capture fisheries (rather than farms). While many labels like “responsibly” or “sustainably” sourced can be found throughout seafood counters, these terms are not limited to wild salmon and are often used on farmed fish labels.

You’ll know salmon is farmed if it is labeled as “Atlantic”, as there are no wild salmon fisheries in the Atlantic ocean. All Atlantic salmon is commercially grown, meaning farmed. Certifications like Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) are specific to farmed salmon as the term “aquaculture” refers to the breeding of fish for harvest. Additionally, common origins for farmed salmon are Norway, New Zealand and Chile.

COOKING WILD SALMON

Each of the five Pacific salmon species boasts unique qualities, which are highlighted through diverse cooking techniques, allowing their flavors to shine in every dish. Chinook is known for its rich oil content and is ideal for grilling and smoking, while the firm texture of coho is well suited to baking and sautéing. Sockeye, which is lean and sturdy, is a favorite for roasting and broiling. Pink and keta have a milder taste and adapt well to an array of culinary styles, from poaching to frying, and pair well with diverse seasonings and sauces.

Because farmed Atlantic salmon is a cultivated and manufactured protein, it has more uniformity in size and higher fat content. This can create a predictability with cooking techniques, but produces a product that lacks depth of flavor and nuance.

↓ SCAN FOR RECIPES



Discover an array of instructions, videos and tips to help you master how to cook salmon with this Salmon Cooking Guide.

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