



Seafood Handling



<p>Fresh Finfish</p>	<p>Look for fillets with a shiny, bright appearance; not dull, torn, or dehydrated. Fresh ocean like scent (fishy or a dirty sock smell indicates old or improperly handled). The fat layer on the skin side of the fillet should be a shiny light pink to tan, not a dark dull color.</p> <p>If fillets have a strong fishy odor you should dispose of them. Fresh fish will last for up to 14 days if refrigerated properly. Remember that for every degree over 32, you lose a half day of shelf life.</p>
<p>Salmon</p>	<p>Whole fish should have shiny, bright clear eyes; gills should be bright red with clear mucus. Scales should be metallic and tight to the skin; when lightly pressing your finger into the flesh, it should bounce back. The belly cavity should be clear of most blood however, if a small amount of blood still remains it should be red, not brown. You should rinse any remaining blood from the cavity. Flesh should be thick with no brown, dehydrated edges. If the head has been removed be sure that the collar is not brown and dehydrated. When receiving filleted fish make sure that the flesh is not torn or broken. Avoid holding fish by the tail; make sure that you use two hands to lift fish. Also, fillets should never be packed flesh to skin.</p>
<p>Halibut</p>	<p>When checking quality, look for a translucent, white flesh color with no browning or dehydration along the edges or collar. Halibut will sometimes contain small worm-like parasites in the collar of the fish. Although they are ugly, they are harmless to humans and will disappear when cooked. Belly cavities of Halibut should be checked in the same manner as whole salmon.</p>
<p>Exotics (Tuna, Mahi Mahi, Swordfish, etc.)</p>	<p>All exotics should be purchased in whole loin form. This gives the opportunity to check the blood line for brightness and the whole loin for any signs of puss pockets or parasites. If these are discovered the loin should immediately be rejected. The blood line of exotics should not be dark brown or have any odor. Tuna, although only socially acceptable as bright red can actually vary in color from bright red to a pale pink. Color of Tuna is not the most important thing, rather the firmness of the flesh. This does not hold true when the loin is a dark brown, this indicates old fish. Sinew in Tuna is also very common; this sinew is similar to the marbling in a good steak. Swordfish should be a nice translucent white to light pink, same with Mahi Mahi. Always be sure to check the blood line for signs of age.</p>
<p>Shellfish</p>	<p>Some shells may open during storage. If so, tap them. They will close if they are alive, if not discard them. Unless you have a live shellfish tank, do not store in water. Fresh water kills shellfish. Always store in a dark, cool place in a hotel pan with drainage holes, place a damp towel over the top with about one handful of ice. The ice should never directly touch the shellfish. Check daily for open animals. Shells should not be cracked and should look moist.</p>
<p>Oysters</p>	<p>Fresh shucked oysters have a shelf life of 14 days from date of processing. Be sure to look for a clear, slightly milky or light gray liquid. Shucked oysters also have an expiration date on the container. If you have to freeze make sure that it is within three to four days of receiving and that the tubs are completely sealed. Oysters will last up to 12 days when stored cup side down in a dark, cool place with plenty of drainage and a wet towel placed over the top.</p>
<p>Clams</p>	<p>As with oysters, clams also come with a shellstock tag indication date of harvest. Be sure that the date of harvest is no longer than five days. Clams should be used within two to three days of receiving. If you need to freeze them, do this within one day of receipt. Do not thaw frozen clams in shell, cook directly from frozen.</p>
<p>Mussels</p>	<p>Mussels as well come with shellstock tags and should also be within five days of harvest. Mussels should be used within two to three days of receiving. You should not freeze mussels. Mussels are also best when the beard is still attached as this will help the mussel to stay tightly shut. The beard can be removed by simply cutting with a pair of scissors. Remember clipping the beard will not kill the mussel, only when the beard is pulled completely from the mussel it will die within 24 hours.</p>

Seafood Handling Continued

Scallops	Live scallops are not readily available because they are highly perishable. When receiving live scallops, they should have the same characteristics of all other shellfish. The shelf life on live is only about 24 hours. However, they can be frozen immediately upon receipt and cooked directly from the frozen state. Scallops are shucked at sea shortly after capture. Fresh scallop meats have a firm texture and a distinct sweet odor. A sour or iodine smell indicates spoilage. Scallops in tubs should be stored tightly closed and allowed to breathe about 15 minutes before cooking, this will eliminate the gassy odor that naturally comes from sealed shellfish containers. If the smell still remains, discard. The smaller bay scallops are usually creamy white, though there may be some normal light tan to pink coloration. The larger sea scallops are also generally creamy white, though they may show some normal light orange to pink color. Shucked scallops should be frozen within five days of receipt and will keep for about eight weeks.
Live Lobster, Crayfish and Crab	Live lobster, crayfish, and crabs should show leg movement and the tail of the lobster or crayfish should curl up tightly underneath the body and not hang down when the animal is picked up. Lobsters, crayfish and crabs will not be very active if they have been refrigerated but they should move at least a little bit. All crustaceans should be cooked within 24 hours of purchase. Cooked crustaceans can be stored in an air-tight container under refrigeration and used within two to three days.
Fresh Crabmeat and Shrimpmeat	Crab and shrimp should be free from odor and stored in a moisture-proof plastic bag or air-tight plastic container for up to five days. Pasteurized crab meat can be refrigerated for up to six months before opening and should be used within two to three days after opening. Frozen crabmeat and shrimpmeat can be frozen in a tightly sealed container for up to three months. Frozen vacuum sealed can be stored for up to one year. Thawed product should be used within four days subject to how old the product was when frozen. Example: If you froze a can of crabmeat three days after receiving the product it will only be good for two days after thawed. Fresh shrimp have a mild odor and firm-textured meat. The shell or meat is not slippery and there are no black spots or patches on the shell or meat. The shell of raw shrimp may be grayish-green, pinkish-tan, or light pink. When cooked the shell turns red and the meat takes on a reddish tint. Cooked shrimp have firm meat and a mild sweet smell.