Aquaculture Oysters: Crassostrea virginica





Market forms: Live in shell, fresh shucked (in pints, quarts or gallons), frozen (breaded

and unbreaded) and frozen half shell.

Marketing: History has proven that the salinity levels of Virginia waters (the mixture

of fresh water from the Appalachian Mountain Range, mixing with the Atlantic Ocean) makes the taste of Virginia oysters superior to other states. Virginia's location also gives our oysters moderate winters and cool summers, which helps Virginia oysters and extends their growing

season.

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."

small - over 500 meats/gallon extra select - 160 to 210 meats/gallon standard - 301 to 500 meats/gallon count - under 160 meats/gallon

select - 211 to 300 meats/gallon

Taste/texture: Plump, delicate, tender, slightly salty.

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. In fact, in blind taste comparisons with its Pacific cousin, the Eastern oyster was voted best

tasting by 85% of those polled.

Habitat: Oysters grow best in estuarine waters of moderate temperature and

salinity with abundant plankton for food. This description best fits the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries which are responsible for high

yields of this shellfish.

Harvesting: The harvesting of aquaculture grown oysters are from private grounds

either from cages or private reefs. This provides a ready supply for

market.