

OYSTERS

LOOK TO TEXAS FOR HIGHEST STANDARDS AND FRESHEST TASTE

TEXAS OYSTERS/WHAT BAYS

Galveston Bay is home to between 60 and 70 percent of the state's oyster crop. Smaller commercial harvests come from Matagorda, San Antonio and Aransas bays.



NUMBER OF POUNDS

Texas ranks second in U.S. oyster production. In 1998, Texas produced more than 3.4 million pounds of oyster meat valued at almost \$8.3 million. The Texas oyster industry added approximately \$25.9 million to the Texas economy.

TYPE OF OYSTER

The American commercial oyster (*Crassostrea Virginica*) thrives in Texas gulf coast bays and estuaries where fresh and salt water combine to create just the right environment for oyster production.

GO TEXAN promotes all Texas agricultural products - food, fiber, wine and horticulture - under one easily recognizable mark, a glowing brand in the shape of Texas.



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SEASON: YEAR-ROUND

Forget the old adage about eating oysters only in "r" months. Thanks to modern refrigeration, Texas oyster lovers can eat their fill all year. Harvest takes place on public reefs in the bay system between Nov. 1 and April 30. From May through October, harvest occurs on private oyster leases, mainly in Galveston Bay.



CERTIFICATION

From reef to restaurant, Texas oysters meet stringent state and federal regulations. Oysters may be harvested only from waters determined sanitary by the Texas Department of Health. Oyster boats are also regulated, and dealers are certified to ensure the safest possible product. TDH inspects oyster plants and monitors federal HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) plans to identify and control potential hazards.



QUANTITIES/BUYING

Certified oyster dealers sell fresh shucked oysters by the pound, half-pint, quart, half-gallon and gallon. In-shell oysters come in 100- and 200-count sacks and boxes. Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) half-shell oysters are available in 144-count boxes. Frozen oyster meat is available in 30-pound packs.

HOW TO SHUCK AN OYSTER

The shell of a fresh oyster is tightly closed. Scrub the shell with a stiff brush and rinse. Holding the shell in one hand and a sturdy oyster knife in the other, insert the knife at the hinge and twist. Run the blade all the way around to pry the oyster open. Cut the oyster muscle where it fastens to the shell.

LENGTH OF STORAGE

Properly refrigerated shucked oysters will keep up to 14 days from the shucking date. In-shell oysters will keep up to 14 days from harvest.*

TEMPERATURE/STORAGE

As with any raw seafood, in-shell and shucked oysters should be transported and stored packed in ice and refrigerated. Store shucked oysters at 38-45 degrees F, in-shell oysters at 38-45 degrees F.*

COOKING TEMPS/TIME: IN-SHELL

In-shell oysters: To cook thoroughly, boil until shells open and continue boiling for 5 minutes; or steam until shells open and continue steaming for 9 minutes. Discard any that do not open.**



Texas Oysters
Gift of the Texas Gulf

COOKING TEMPS/TIME: SHUCKED

Boil at least 3 minutes. Fry in oil at least 3 minutes at 375 degrees F. Broil 3 inches from the heat for 3 minutes. Bake (as in Oysters Rockefeller) for 10 minutes at 450 degrees F.**

Learn more about Texas oysters and discover great oyster recipes at www.TexasOysters.org. For more information on GO TEXAN, the Texas Department of Agriculture's comprehensive marketing campaign for Texas agricultural products, call 1.877.99GO-TEX.