

How to Prepare and Cook Seafood Safely

The safe preparation and cooking of seafood including fish, crustaceans, and shellfish are essential for commercial kitchens. Seafood is a leading cause of food-borne illnesses, requiring extra care throughout the entire journey from the source to the plate.



Here's how to prepare and cook seafood safely

Purchase

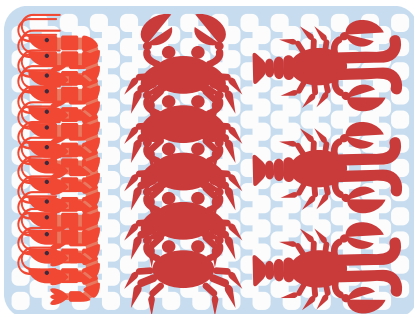
The sourcing of seafood is an important first step. Key considerations when purchasing seafood include:

- A fresh and mild smell
- Clear and shiny fish eyes
- Firm flesh
- Red bloodlines within fish fillets
- Clear or pearl-like shrimp, scallop, and lobster flesh
- Frozen product is unopened or damaged
- Frozen product is free from frost or ice crystals

Storage

Safe storage of seafood prolongs life cycle and prevents the growth of bacteria. Storage tips include:

- Refrigerate seafood for a maximum of two days
- Wrap seafood tightly in plastic or foil before storing in the freezer
- Separate frozen and fresh seafood
- Regularly monitor temperatures within the fridge and freezer
- Keep seafood chilled until cooking or serving



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Preparation

Frozen and fresh seafood must be prepared carefully to ensure that the spread of bacteria is minimised. Remember the following when in the preparation phase:

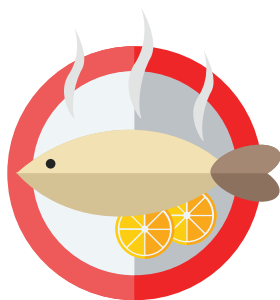
- Wash your hands before handling any seafood
- Wash cutting boards and utensils before and during the preparation of seafood
- Thaw frozen seafood safely by immersing sealed portions into water or in the microwave on a defrost setting



Serving

Once seafood leaves the kitchen, follow safe serving guidelines to ensure that patrons can best enjoy their meal.

- Never leave seafood out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours
- Keep cold seafood chilled until serving
- Keep hot seafood warm until serving



Cooking

Once prepared, seafood must either meet certain standards to be served raw or cooked to safe temperatures.

- Cooked fish should appear opaque and separate easily
- Uncooked fish should meet industry standards and grades (ie. sashimi)
- Crab, lobster, and scallops should become firm and opaque once cooked
- Clams, mussels, and oysters' shells should open during cooking



Eating

Some groups of people are more at-risk of food poisoning. These groups include pregnant women, children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems (such as cancer, HIV/Aids or diabetes). These people should avoid:

- Raw or undercooked seafood (such as sashimi)
- Raw oysters, even if they have been treated
- Refrigerated smoked seafood (such as smoked salmon or tuna)

