

Your Guide To Oysters

by Sara Ann Harris,

Louisiana Seafood Board

(NAPSA)—A dare. A local curiosity. A southern specialty. These are enticements you heeded in your intro to Louisiana oysters. However, the mystique of oysters may actually scare some home cooks away.

The Louisiana Seafood Board brings you a handy guide to selecting and preparing oysters, so you can serve this delicacy fearlessly.

What Do Oysters Look Like?

Oyster meats are cream to light brown with ruffled edges and a silky texture. Avoid fluffy white oysters as they're filled with water. Oysters should not be floating, but packed closely—with no more than 10 percent liquid.

Oysters are available in pints or quarts. The containers should be clean. Check for government-required information: best-if-used-by date, interstate shellfish permit #, weight, nutrition facts, and country of origin.

How Do Oysters Smell?

Oysters have a clean ocean smell. Never buy oysters with an odor.

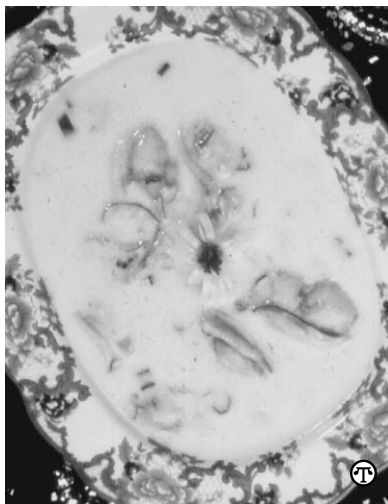
How Much Is One Serving?

Louisiana oysters are available year-round and vary in size from season to season. Skinny oysters come as many as 30 to the pint. Medium or fat oysters come 16 to 18 per pint. Either way, a pint is approximately three servings.

What Do Oysters Taste Like?

American oysters, Eastern oysters, Gulf of Mexico oysters, or Louisiana oysters—they are actually all the same animal. In fact, there is only one oyster that is native to the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

However, like fine wines, oysters have subtle nuances in flavor—depending on where



**Chef Paul Prudhomme's
Oyster Stew**

they're cultivated. In a blind taste test by an independent researcher, consumers chose Louisiana oysters over others sold in the U.S. 85 percent of the time.

Try this longtime Louisiana oyster favorite.

Traditional Louisiana Oyster Stew 4 servings

- 1½ pints medium Louisiana oysters
- ½ cup shallots, diced
- 1 pint milk
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- Salt & pepper to taste

Over a high heat, sauté shallots in butter. Stir in milk. Bring to boiling point, then lower heat. Ease in oysters. Simmer until oyster edges curl (3-5 minutes). Add salt & pepper. Serve with crackers.

Look for other Tips for the Home Cook at the recipe page at www.LouisianaSeafood.com.