

What's in Season from the Garden State

Seasonal Highlights from Cooperative Extension, a unit of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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Special Winter Issue



Top: Viking Village vessel that harvests the highest quality day-boat scallops entering Barnegat Inlet.

Bottom: Sea clam boat coming in to the Port of Cape May with ocean clams to be processed into fried clam strips or chopped clams for chowders.

Photos by Gef Flimlin

Looking for Local in the Winter? Think *Jersey Seafood* Gef Flimlin, Marine Extension Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County

Each summer in New Jersey we seek out *Jersey Fresh* fruits and vegetables because we know they are locally produced, are high quality, and our purchases support New Jersey farmers. But what to do during the winter?

Even when our farmers are planning next year's crops, the New Jersey Commercial Fishing Industry is still working through the tough months of the winter. During this season, some folks think about eating fish on Fridays, others eat it all year because they like it, think it's good for them, and enjoy cooking it. Presently over 85% of the seafood consumed in the US is imported! We actually spend way more money supporting fishermen's families around the globe than we do our own domestic fleets, and it certainly isn't locally produced.

So when you go to the supermarket, your usual fish market, or favorite restaurant, specifically ask for *Jersey Seafood*. At this time of year, you can get clams, oysters, scallops, porgies, fluke, skate, whiting, tile fish, red hake and maybe tuna, swordfish, cod and Atlantic mackerel as well as frozen squid or canned clams and scungilli. Try something different, seek out a new recipe. Just say, "What do you have today from New Jersey?"

Where to find Jersey Seafood?

Often people don't know where to find New Jersey seafood. While the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's *Jersey Seafood* program has developed promotional signage that some markets and restaurants display, the best thing to do is ask. This will inform you whether it is local as well as vocalize the demand for local seafood. When buying seafood, ask about the fish that is in the case. Where does it come from? If it is from out of the US, then COOL (Country of Origin Labeling) should be visible. Ask to smell it, see if it seems fresh...it shouldn't smell fishy. Look to see if the shellfish shells are tightly closed, or at least close up when tapped. Ask what the seafood guy would buy if he were making the purchase. But at least ask if there is something from New Jersey. If not, then get something else, but try not to buy stuff that is from the other side of the world. And don't forget that canned clams may come from New Jersey and look for frozen cleaned squid from New Jersey too.



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Photo source: Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve

Did you know?

Did you know the way fertilizer is applied to your lawn can impact New Jersey's waterways like Barnegat Bay? While fertilizers are important to maintain a healthy lawn, which in turn prevents soil erosion from lack of vegetation, under certain circumstances these nutrients can be washed into local waterways during rainstorms.

The New Jersey Fertilizer Law, passed in 2011, was conceived to protect all New Jersey surface and groundwaters from impairment by minimizing nitrogen and phosphorus loading from lawn fertilizer. Generally, excess nitrogen is a threat to coastal water (estuaries) quality while excess phosphorus is a greater concern for fresh water quality. Often these nutrients lead to overgrowth of algae or aquatic plant life which reduces oxygen for fish and other species.

How does the New Jersey Fertilizer Law affect you? Visit Rutgers NJAES website for answers to frequently asked questions about the law: <http://snyderfarm.rutgers.edu/NJfertilizerlawguide.html>.

Where to find Jersey Fresh? Ask for it where you shop or dine or go to: <http://www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov>

To receive these reports by e-mail: njfarmfresh@njaes.rutgers.edu

Web: <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu>

For your county Rutgers Cooperative Extension office go to:

<http://www.njaes.rutgers.edu/county>

Seafood and the Environment

While seeking local seafood, the issue of sustainability and its impact on local fisheries, the economy, the broader marine environment, and the quality of life in New Jersey are important considerations. For information on sustainable seafood, visit the NOAA Fish Watch website: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch>.

Seafood and Health

Many people are confused about whether to eat seafood, because despite hearing all the health benefits, they are concerned about the risk of environmental contamination. But the quick answer is that all those who look at the risks for people consuming a variety of types of fish and shellfish say that the benefits far outweigh any potential risks. And for the vast majority of seafood the biggest risk is burning your hand taking it out of the oven. For more about seafood health risks and benefits, visit the Seafood Safety website developed by Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/seafoodsafety>.

Watch New Jersey Fishermen and Seafood Chefs in Action

Viking Village commercial fishing dock in Barnegat Light, NJ does a great job in maintaining quality and moving product fast out to buyers and restaurants. Some videos of the Viking Village fleet demonstrating New Jersey fisheries in action can be seen on their website: <http://vimeopro.com/kaltenbach/vikingvillagedock/video/24561391>.

Whether it is smoking fish, how to eat mussels or shucking oysters, New Jersey chefs demonstrate seafood preparation on the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Jersey Seafood website at: <http://www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov>.



If you think that locally produced food is important, if you like to eat seafood, and if you think that this idea of asking for *Jersey Seafood* has merit for New Jersey's fishermen, their families, and our economy, buy New Jersey seafood, and then share this idea by passing it along to your friends. The fishermen will appreciate your support.



Gef Flimlin discusses the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program focused on educating individual, household, and community behaviors affecting the sustainability of Barnegat Bay and its resources (<http://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/marine/bbsrp.html>).

Photo by Jack Rabin, Rutgers NJAES