Safe Seafood and What to Avoid in 2017

Roughly half of all of our seafood is from farmed sources. That isn't inherently a bad thing. Farmed fish seems like a logically, responsible consumer choice. The problem is that modern agriculture's ability to slowly strip away as many nutrients from our food as possible while making our food toxic, and causing irreversible environmental damage, is not exclusive to land.

Wild-caught seafood is also problematic. Hopefully, we all know how bad the condition is in our oceans. In addition to overfishing certain species to the point of potential food chain collapse, wild caught seafood frequently comes with mercury or PCBs (an industrial chemical). For those who like to eat fish or appreciate an omega-3, DHA brain boost, is does our current seafood model offer anything left to enjoy or worth preserving?

Here's Where You Are

Much like land-based agriculture, the best way to ensure the quality of your seafood is to do it yourself or get it from a trusted individual or company (although the latter is less likely). Unlike agriculture, opportunities to exercise personal seafood quality control are few and far between. Many don't live near water, and those that do should be cautious of eating local fish due to PCBs, mercury, DDT, and other chemical runoff. You could farm your own tilapia…but this isn't feasible for almost everyone. With those eliminated, the question is: farmed or wild caught?

The Elephant Under the Sea

Much time has been spent discussing the differences between farmed and wild caught fish, and everyone agrees that farm raised fish is fattier than wild caught. From a health standpoint, fatty acids are the best reason to eat fish. But this doesn't mean that farm raised fish are better for you, as the fatty acids in tilapia are primarily omega-6s and an excess of those are more likely to increase cardiovascular risk than boost brainpower. Farmed fish are also fed a completely unnatural diet from grain to chicken meal to other fish meal to other animal waste products. This often results in fattier, less nutritious seafood with more chemical residues than wild caught fish (though wild caught fish does have high levels of mercury). Neither option is a slam dunk, but farmed fish are more likely to cause long-term health issues.

Seafood Safety List

There's really no way to eat guarantee that your seafood dinner will be healthy and sustainable, though most seafood falls into one of three categories – safe and sustainable, unsafe, or unsustainable. Safe and sustainable seafood is the best possible type of seafood to consume, as it is less likely to have high levels of mercury, PCBs, and harvested in a way that doesn't damage the ecosystem.

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- oysters (farmed or not)
- Pacific sardines (wild caught)

- Atlantic mackerel (wild caught)
- clams (farmed or not)
- Alaskan salmon

Unsafe fish are fish that are likely to have high amounts of mercury and PCBs and should be avoided. These fish are generally bigger in size, as their longer lifespan allows for a greater build-up of contaminants. They are not necessarily sustainable, but some of these fish include:

- shrimp
- swordfish
- tilapia (farmed)
- Atlantic cod
- shark
- big-eye tuna
- ahi tuna
- Atlantic salmon (farmed)

Unsustainable fish are the fish that are overfished, in danger of disappearing or cause environmental devastation through the way it is harvested. It’s debatable whether any seafood is truly sustainable at this point. Regardless, some of the worst offenders when it comes to sustainability are:

- Chilean sea bass
- all tuna
- orange roughy
- red snapper
- Greenland halibut
- swordfish
- Atlantic sea scallops

The most popular fish at your average fish counter are usually shrimp, tuna, salmon, and tilapia. None of those are an ideal choice. The ideal choice is likely something smaller, wild caught, and from fisheries in the Pacific. But that can be difficult to find at the local fish counter. Finding sustainable and healthy seafood is already a difficult and

time-consuming prospect. Is it likely to get better or worse?

What Sustainability Looks Like

Here the biggest seafood issue today: sustainability. Sustainability is choosing seafood that brought to market while considering the long-term health of that particular species and the overall health of the ocean. There are several organizations, like Seawatch or the Marine Conservation Society, dedicated to determining which seafood will have the least impact on ocean health. But right now that doesn't really make a difference. For our fish consumption to be at a level the ocean can sustain, at least one out of every two people needs to stop eating seafood completely. Until that happens, there really isn't a guilt-free way to enjoy seafood.

Related Reading:

- *The Way We Used To Eat – The Real Paleo Diet*
- *Top 5 Foods that Detox Heavy Metals and Toxins – With Protocol*
- *Mercury Fillings, Root Canals, Cavitations – What You Need to Know*
- *How To Detoxify and Heal From Vaccinations – For Adults and Children*

Sources:

- *The Best Fish for Your Health and the Earth* – Mercola
- *This is Why You Need to Stop Eating Tilapia ASAP* – Goodfullnes
- *The Seafood You Should and Shouldn't Eat* – ABC
- *What You Need to Know About Farm-Raised Vs. Wild-Caught Fish* – wtop.com
- *Gone Fishing … But is Your Catch Safe to Eat?* – Mother Earth News
- *Unsustainable Fishing* – WWF
- *Red List Fish* – Greenpeace

- *Suzuki's Top 10 Sustainable Seafood Picks* – David Suzuki Foundation