

Oysters (Fish & Seafood)

Interesting facts: Oysters are meatier in months that have “r” in their names. So you may hear people call them “arsters.” Although all oysters can secrete pearls, the pearl oyster family (Pteriidae) comes from a different family to the edible oyster. It is said that Henry IV liked to toss back 300 as an appetizer and that Casanova reportedly consumed 50-60 oysters a day with his evening punch.

How to select: Always buy wild caught/ harvested; not farmed. Whether you dig them up, buy them at a local seafood store or order them through the mail, there’s one sure way to tell if an oyster is alive. If its shell is open, you tap on it with your fingers, and it snap shut, then it’s alive.

How to clean and store: Store live oysters in the refrigerator at 40 °F. if they are not to be used immediately. Place them deep side down (to retain their juices) in an open container. Cover the oysters with a damp towel or layers of damp newspaper. Oyster store this way will keep up to 5 to 7 days. Canned shellfish that does not require refrigeration may be stored for a year or longer, as long as the can is not dented or rusty. Cans (of any food) that are swollen or bloated may contain life-threatening bacteria and should be discarded.

How to prepare and cook: Raw, Roasted

Raw: Shuck the oysters from the shell. Take your tiny fork and sort of move the oyster around in its liquid-filled half shell to make sure it's detached. Then put down your fork, pick up the shell, and slurp down the oyster from the wide end—it's more aerodynamic that way. Some like to add hot sauce. Chew the fish one or twice before you swallow it.

Roasted: Lay your oysters out evenly on an old roasting dish that's filled with a little bit of water. Set your burner to medium-high heat, cover your grill, and let cook for 5-10 minutes. Oysters are done when their shells open. Discard any oysters that didn't open during the cooking process.