

*Plan today for holiday shipments*

# Northern shrimp: A gala addition to a winter's night



The water is cold, the air is colder and the sun low in the sky during the shrimping season in New England and Canada's Maritimes – a far cry from the long lazy days that summer people take home in memories. The product of cold water, Northern shrimp are sweet and inexpensive for the holidays.

By Catherine Schmitt



Northern shrimp: Colorful and inexpensive.



Maine shrimp can be used in the same way as warm-water or farm-pond shrimp: boiled and peeled by hand and dipped in butter or cocktail sauce, in shrimp salad, stir-fried and tucked into spring rolls, sautéed with pasta and, of course, the classic New England seafood shack way: battered and deep-fried.

**T**he arrival of the holidays heralds the start of shrimp season in northern New England. This delicacy is cause for celebration both locally and around the world, where many people look forward to fresh Maine shrimp for holiday meals.

Inexpensive and available from December through April, Maine shrimp are a silver lining in an otherwise cloudy menu of the northern winter.

Also known as Northern shrimp or *Pandalus borealis*, Maine shrimp are found throughout the Arctic, North Atlantic, and North Pacific oceans. In early winter, when females move close to shore to hatch their eggs, shrimp are harvested from muddy-bottom habitat off the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts with trawls and traps.

Because shrimp is a day-boat fishery, the fresh product is readily available from New England fish markets and roadside vendors during the season. Maine fishermen take approximately 87 percent of the catch in the Northeast, which in the 2005-06 season was more than 2,000 metric tons.

Maine shrimp are small, pink to reddish in color, with a large head that takes up half the length and most of the weight. Their shells are thin and easy to remove. They do not need to be deveined.

Shrimp caught in New England are at the southern edge of their range, and they tend to be much bigger than shrimp caught in Canadian waters farther to the north, according to Tom Keegan of Cozy Harbor Seafood in Portland, Maine. But even large Maine shrimp, at three to four inches long, are still pretty small by shrimp standards.

“It’s not something that people buy with their eyes,” says Keegan. What Maine shrimp lack in size they make up for in flavor: unique, tender, and sweet. Their small size means they cook very quickly (or not at all, if prepared as sushi or ceviche).

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Because of their delicate nature and tender texture, Maine shrimp do not hold up well to a lot of handling and are less suitable for grilling or stuffing.

Fresh shrimp can be purchased whole and unwashed fresh off the boat; without heads and

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz 85g (85g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 84	Calories from Fat 8
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	1%
Trans Fat	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 166mg	55%
<b>Sodium</b> 190mg	8%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
<b>Protein</b> 18g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 3%
Calcium 3%	Iron 15%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
NutritionData.com	

## Northerns are Canadian

The bulk of Atlantic-caught Northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) comes from Canadian waters and, as in production south of the border, is sold frozen.

A fresh market infrastructure has yet to be established, said Stephen Scott, sales director for Ocean Choice International, based in St. Johns, Newfoundland.

There is a small fresh market in Quebec, supplied by local boats. But the size and nature of the species — small individual sizes and flesh that holds up well in freezing — dictate that the bulk of the supply will be frozen.

“It’s a good product, but it isn’t striking enough to hold the center of the plate,” Scott said. ■



## To your loading dock

Here’s how you’ll get shrimp from the North Atlantic to your loading dock.

You’ll find wholesale shrimp meat or headless with tails in bags ranging from 2 pounds to 10 pounds.

Master cases run 10 pounds to 50 pounds, but processors will work with their customers on pack size.

You’ll find the product fresh, block frozen, or IQF.

Most restaurant, retail fish cases, and food services don’t want to deal with the whole shrimp.

The season is from mid-December through May for fresh product; frozen is available year-round.

Fresh or thawed Northern shrimp will hold for three or four days at 32 degrees.

Estimated costs: For tails, \$2.50-\$3.50. For meat, \$4-\$4.50. ■

— Hank Soule, Portland Fish Exchange

cleaned; and as meat. Early in the season they may be covered with greenish roe, prized by some but rinsed off by most.

Frozen product is available year-round and, while it is not quite the same as fresh, it’s still good fried, as a filling ingredient, or a pizza topping.

Cozy Harbor Seafood in Portland, Maine, processes shrimp on the day of catch. Its most popular product is cooked and peeled IQF frozen Maine shrimp in 9-ounce retail packs and in bulk. Counts range from 80 to 150 finished meats per pound.

Locally, Cozy Harbor sells raw, hand-peeled shrimp either as IQF or frozen in blocks. Maine shrimp will keep frozen for up to 18 months; once thawed, they should be used within four days. ■



Each trawl produces more shrimp.



A popular presentation: Fried northern shrimp.



# At a glance

**Species Name:** Northern shrimp  
(*Pandalus borealis*)

**RANGE:** From cold waters of the Northern Hemisphere south to the Gulf of Maine.

**PORTION SIZE:** Two pounds of whole shrimp will yield about one pound of cooked shrimp.

**PACKAGING:** Shrimp season in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts usually runs from December through April; frozen product is available year-round. Cozy Harbor Seafood in Portland, Maine, ships 5- or 10-pound bags inside boxes on pallets in freezer trucks.

**Fishery status:** Northern shrimp is a small but valuable fishery in the Northeast. Annual landings are valued at \$6 million. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates the fishery, does not consider the stock to be overfished. By-catch limits and redesigned nets have led to a renewed, clean fishery for Northern



Northern shrimp: Sweetness at a small price.

shrimp. Recent research has found that shrimp trawling does not result in long-term impacts to the sea floor.

**COST:** In 2005-06, prices for fresh Maine shrimp at the Portland Fish Exchange ranged from 30 cents to \$1 per pound. Estimated wholesale prices for frozen product are about \$4 per pound for larger sizes (80-110 per pound). ■



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