

Celebrate October with Maryland Seafood!

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Annapolis, MD- Are you ready for succulent oysters, juicy crabs, and tender, flaky blue catfish? Autumn is the perfect time for Maryland seafood because the best of the best is in season at the same time!

October is National Seafood Month. Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Joe Bartenfelder suggests celebrating with the bounty of Maryland's waters. "You'll be eating the freshest crabs, oysters and fish and you'll be supporting our state's local economy," said Secretary Bartenfelder.

Maryland seafood is dominated by the iconic crab. 2016 saw 36.6 million pounds landed by Maryland watermen. That harvest was worth about approximately \$56.6 million. 282,000 bushels of oysters were brought in, worth \$12.27 million. The rockfish harvest was 1.47 million pounds brought in \$4.83 million.

MDA is encouraging Marylanders to ask for Maryland seafood in restaurant visits and for home cooks to try recipes that include the local bounty. In particular, one invasive species to the Chesapeake Bay, blue catfish is a tasty addition to Maryland seafood.

When purchasing fish, look for signs of freshness and quality: bright, clear eyes, scales that adhere tightly to the skin, skin that springs back when lightly pressed, bright pink or red gills and a mild sea breeze scent. Always rinse finfish and shellfish with cold water before cooking.

Visit www.marylandsbest.net to learn more about Maryland seafood, where to find it and try delicious seafood recipes. To learn about the invasive and tasty blue catfish, check out https://www.chesapeakebay.net/discover/field-guide/entry/blue_catfish

Home cooks: try this Blue Catfish Tacos recipe from the old Line Fish Company, a project of the Oyster Recovery Partnership: <http://oldlinefish.com/recipe/blue-catfish-tacos/>

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