



MINISTERO DELL'AGRICOLTURA
DELLA SOVRANITÀ ALIMENTARE
E DELLE FORESTE



UECOOP

WHAT KIND OF FISH SHOULD I CHOOSE?

**A guide to informed purchasing of fishery
and aquaculture products in Italy**



PROMUOVERE
IL MARE PER
PROMUOVERE
IL FUTURO

PNT 2025/2027

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INTRODUCTION

Seafood products, both marine and freshwater, are particularly healthy and nutritious foods: rich in protein, polyunsaturated fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins, they are also light and healthy. However, many people don't eat enough because they feel unsure when purchasing, often due to a lack of transparency in information about the catch. This creates a widespread lack of trust, which ultimately leads to lower consumption.

The primary objective of this guide, designed in a simple and accessible way, is precisely to provide consumers with clear and precise information about seafood, such as recognizing species, understanding the method and location of fishing or farming, knowing the shelf life of seafood, and knowing how to read traceability information.

With greater knowledge, consumers will not only be able to make safer and more satisfying purchases, but will also be able to choose quality products, contributing to more widespread, sustainable and informed consumption.

What's left to say? Let's get to know Italian fish!

Please note: Regarding the seasonality of each species listed, it is emphasized that despite their presence during the periods indicated, catching may be subject to a ban due to "fishing bans" during closed periods established by individual Italian Regions.

In the following tabs, you will find fish, molluscs, and crustaceans listed by their Italian names followed by their English translation, so you can better familiarize yourself with the local culture and recognize the different species at the market or restaurant.

FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS

To begin with, let's see how commonly consumed fishery products can be classified into three groups of aquatic organisms.

FISH

Vertebrate animals that are classified based on their skeleton into cartilaginous fish (such as ray, dogfish, and spiny dogfish) and bony fish (which constitute most consumed species).

Based on their habitat, fish are classified into:

- **freshwater fish** (such as carp, pike, perch, trout, tench, catfish, etc.)
- **diadromous fish** (which live in both fresh and salt water, such as salmon, eel, sturgeon, etc.)
- **saltwater fish** (such as anchovies, snapper, cod, sea bream, sea bass, white sea bream, sole, sardines, tuna, mackerel, etc.).

MOLLUSCS

Invertebrate animals that are distinguished by their shell. This can be:

- external and single, as in **gastropod molluscs** (e.g., snails, murex, etc.)
- external and divided into two valves, as in **bivalve molluscs** (e.g., mussels, clams, oysters, scallops, lupins, razor clams, cockles, etc.)
- internal or absent, as in **cephalopod molluscs**. These are characterized by the presence of a bulky head equipped with peri-oral appendages, hence the name, which comes from the combination of two words: *kephale* = head and *podos* = foot, meaning animals with their heads attached to their feet.

We also distinguish:

- **decapods** (such as cuttlefish, squid, and squid), which have ten tentacles, or rather eight arms that they use for movement and two longer tentacles that extend to grasp prey
- **octopods** (such as octopuses and musky octopuses), which have only eight arms and lack true tentacles. Musky octopus and octopus differ in the number of rows of suckers on their arms: musky octopus have only one, while octopus has two symmetrical ones.

CRUSTACEANS

Aquatic arthropods have legs composed of interconnected segments. They are characterized by a rigid external skeleton — called a carapace — and highly prized meats such as, for example: lobster, crayfish, Norway lobster, shrimp, prawns, mantis shrimp, spider crab, crabs, etc.



Acciuga or Alice / ANCHOVY

The anchovy is a saltwater fish of the *Engraulidae* family. Its scientific name is *Engraulis encrasicolus*.

MORPHOLOGY. The anchovy has a thin, tapered body. It is elongated, fusiform, without a keel, and covered with a series of scales. The lower jaw is shorter than the upper jaw. It has large, forward-positioned eyes. It has a bluish, silvery colour on the sides.

SIZE. 15-20 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. It lives in deep water, coming close to the coast to spawn.

SEASONALITY. From April to November.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, known as trawls and flying nets, or encircling nets, attracting fish with lights called "*lampare*".

QUALITIES. It is among the most prized blue fish for its nutritional properties, including a high concentration of omega-3s, high-quality proteins, vitamins, and minerals such as calcium, iron, and iodine. Its flavourful flesh is sold fresh, salted, preserved in oil, frozen, and transformed into anchovy paste.

NOTE. It is a very delicate fish because it is easily perishable. Its freshness is recognized by its firm, compact flesh, its bright, shiny eyes, and its distinctive aroma.



Aguglia / NEEDLEFISH

The needlefish is a saltwater fish of the *Belonidae* family. Its scientific name is *Belone belone*.

MORPHOLOGY. Extremely elongated and cylindrical in shape, the needlefish is dark blue on the back and silvery on the sides. Its particularly pronounced jaw resembles a long beak, which extends beyond the rest of the body.

SIZE. It generally reaches an average length of 45 cm but can easily reach 80 cm and weigh over 1 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Canary Islands, Azores, British Isles.

HABITAT. Lives in deep waters, approaching the coast in spring.

SEASONALITY. From August to November.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, lines. One of its distinguishing features is its love for light sources, which is why it is often found swimming on the surface of the water, just below the surface of the sea, where it loves to hide and blend in with the waves.

QUALITIES. The needlefish's flesh is white with pink veins, firm, and flavourful. Relatively low in fat, rich in protein, B vitamins, and minerals, it is ideal for quick cooking.

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Alaccia / ROUND SARDINELLA

The round sardinella is a marine fish belonging to the *Clupeidae* family. Its scientific name is *Sardinella aurita*.



MORPHOLOGY. It closely resembles the herring, although it is larger and stockier.

SIZE. It can reach 25-35 cm in length.

DISTRIBUTION. The Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It usually concentrates in waters hundreds of meters deep and is almost never found on the coast.

SEASONALITY. From May to November.

HOW TO FISH. Purse seine nets and trawls.

QUALITIES. Although it is somewhat spiny, it is very tasty and nutritious. It adapts to various preparations and can also be eaten raw, provided it is thoroughly sanitized.



Anguilla / EEL

The European eel is a bony fish both marine and freshwater, as it lives in freshwater but reproduces in the sea (catadromous species).

Belonging to the *Anguillidae* family, its scientific name is *Anguilla anguilla*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a long, cylindrical shape, compressed posteriorly. It is covered with very slimy skin that is generally removed before consumption. It is yellow greenish in colour on the back, while the belly is lighter.

SIZE. Males average 60 to 80 cm in length; females can reach 1.5 m.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Baltic Sea.

HABITAT. It lives in the sea and in freshwater. It prefers muddy bottoms, in which it burrows.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Fyke nets, fish traps, pots, and beach seines.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is white, flavourful, and buttery, with an intense flavour and a marine aroma. It is an oily fish, rich in monounsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for cardiovascular health.

NOTE. In its juvenile stage, it is called "glass eel," while the large adult is called "large eel".



Aragosta / SPINY LOBSTER

The Mediterranean lobster is a crustacean of the *Decapoda* order and the *Palinuridae* family. Its scientific name is *Palinurus elephas*.

MORPHOLOGY. This crustacean is characterized by a large, spiny, reddish-purple carapace and two very long frontal antennae. It has no claws or dorsal spine.

SIZE. It can reach 50 cm in length and a weight of 8 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. The Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It lives on rocky seabeds at depths of 20 to 200 m.

SEASONALITY. April and May.

HOW TO FISH. Nets, large pots, and trawling.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is dry and flavourful. It is undoubtedly the most prized crustacean.

NOTE. It is sold live. Only the tail (usually boiled) is eaten, which should be curved after cooking. If it remains rigid, the product is not fresh and should not be consumed. Imported lobsters, which are significantly less valuable than the Italian ones, are mostly sold frozen or pre-cooked.



Astice / EUROPEAN LOBSTER



The European lobster is a crustacean of the *Nephropidae* family. Its scientific name is *Homarus gammarus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is the largest Mediterranean crustacean. It has a robust body without denticles. The first pair of legs are transformed into claws. It is characterized by its typical dark bluish colour, or brown with yellow spots.

SIZE. It can reach a length of 65 cm and a weight of 6 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, very common in the Adriatic Sea.

HABITAT. Mixed sandy and rocky seabeds up to 100 m deep.

SEASONALITY. From April to September.

HOW TO FISH. Pots and nets.

QUALITIES. It is a particularly sought-after product thanks to its exquisite white meat with a strong flavour. It is larger and has a more tapered body than the American lobster, with softer and more delicate meat. When cooked, the lobster's shell turns a deep, bright red, like that of a spiny lobster.

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Barbo / BARBEL



The European barbel is a freshwater bony fish belonging to the *Cyprinidae* family. Its scientific name is *Barbus barbus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a slender body suited to living in flowing waters, a conical and pointed head, and a mouth oriented toward the bottom, with four barbels used to search for food. Its coloration varies from a greenish-brown back to yellowish sides and a white belly, while the fins are often spotted or reddish.

SIZE. It is a medium-large fish; maximum length can vary depending on the species and environment, but rarely exceeds 50 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. The European barbel has been introduced to northern and central Italy, while native species such as the Po River barbel (*Barbus plebejus*) and the common barbel (*Barbus caninus*) are concentrated in northern Italy.

HABITAT. A very common fish in Alpine waterways, where it usually lives in shoals on the riverbed. It prefers rivers and streams with clear, well-oxygenated water and gravelly or rocky bottoms.

SEASONALITY. From late spring to summer (despite lower water levels in the warm months), in waterways with good flow and oxygenation conditions.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. Barbel meat, although rich in bones, is prized for its tasty flavour and ease of digestion, as well as for the benefits provided by omega-3 fatty acids, potassium, and mineral salts.

NOTE. It is an excellent option for those seeking weight loss or on specific diets. The eggs should not be consumed, as they are toxic and cause severe gastric problems.



Boga / BOGUE

The bogue is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Boops boops*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, fusiform body, laterally compressed, a dark (yellow green) back, and silvery sides. It is characterized by large eyes and a small mouth with incisor teeth.

SIZE. It typically reaches 10-25 cm but can grow up to 35-40 cm in length.

DISTRIBUTION. It is a coastal fish, able to adapt to variable environments.

HABITAT. It is widespread in the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. It lives in shoals and prefers rocky bottoms and seagrass meadows.

SEASONALITY. All year round, but mainly from April to November.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, encircling nets, and trawls; pots, handlines.

QUALITIES. It is considered a "poor" fish. Its flesh is moderately firm, compact, and when cooked, it turns white and somewhat dry.

NOTE. Bogue was among the most used fish for the preparation of "*garum*", the famous salt-fermented sauce very popular among the ancient Romans. It should be gutted immediately after purchase because it tends to ferment very quickly.

Busbana / POOR COD



The poor cod, also known as yellow codling, is a marine fish of the *Gadidae* family. Its scientific name is *Trisopterus capellanus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a slender, compressed body, with three dorsal fins and two anal fins, and a barbel under the chin. The back is yellowish-brown, the sides are silvery, and the belly is white.

SIZE. Approximately 26 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. It lives on seabeds ranging from 25 to 300 m deep. It prefers sandy and muddy bottoms but can also be found on hard bottoms.

SEASONALITY. It is caught year-round, but its peak season is from March to July.

HOW TO FISH. Trawling.

QUALITIES. Its meat is similar to cod.

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Calamaro / SQUID



The squid is a cephalopod mollusc belonging to the *Loliginidae* family. Its scientific name is *Loligo vulgaris*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, robust, and muscular body with a triangular swimming fin that encircles almost the entire mantle. This distinguishes it from its similar squid, in which this fin is significantly smaller. The head protrudes from the sac-shaped body, with eight short arms and two long tentacles. It is white in colour with reddish hues.

SIZE. It can reach 50 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Present in all seas and very widespread in the Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It lives in open waters at depths of up to 300 m but normally remains within 20 m.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, lines, purse seines.

QUALITIES. Its tasty flesh lends itself to numerous preparations.

NOTE. It is also available commercially pre-cleaned and sliced into rings, fresh or frozen. Caution: it can be confused with and substituted for less valuable squid (Flying squid).



Canestrello / QUEEN SCALLOP

The queen scallop is a bivalve mollusc belonging to the *Pectinidae* family. Its scientific name is *Aequipecten opercularis*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a shell with two almost identical valves, rounded in shape, with two lateral auricles. Regular, fan-shaped ribs extend from the hinge. Its colour is highly variable: white, reddish-brown, orange, or purple.

SIZE. Approximately 6-9 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea and eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Muddy and sandy seabeds.

SEASONALITY. October, November, December, February, and March.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets or hand-harvested.

QUALITIES. Very tasty meat. Must be sold alive to ensure freshness. The shell must be closed and intact, a sign that the animal inside is still alive. Sold fresh, even shelled.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.



Cannocchia / MANTIS SHRIMP

The mantis shrimp is a crustacean of the *Squilla* family. Its scientific name is *Squilla Mantis*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, flattened body of a pinkish/yellowish, pearly colour, with two purple-black spots at the base of the tail (the "telson"). It has captive claws armed with six spines.

SIZE. It can reach 25 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. The Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It lives on muddy and sandy seabeds near the coast, no deeper than 100 m.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, September, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets and pots.

QUALITIES. The mantis shrimp has delicate, sweet, and flavourful flesh, which is rich in protein, B vitamins, iron, potassium, and zinc, but also contains cholesterol.

NOTE. It is sold alive to ensure its freshness; it's helpful to check the shell, which should be firm, free of damaged or yellowed areas, nor dry or cracked. It should give off a faint salty odour.



Cannolicchio / RAZOR CLAM



The razor clam is a bivalve mollusc of the *Solenidae* family. Its scientific name is *Solen marginatus*.

MORPHOLOGY. Very elongated, cylindrical shell with two valves open at both ends, from one of which two siphons protrude. It has two teeth along the hinge that closes the valves, with longitudinal striations. The fruit is yellowish white in colour with a small "tongue" protruding from the shell.

SIZE. Approximately 10-17 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Common in the Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. Lives buried on sandy shores near the shoreline.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. By hand with a special iron or with a hydraulic dredge. It is caught mainly during tidal changes.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is flavourful and firm. It is considered a prized mollusc due to its increasingly difficult availability. It must be sold alive to ensure its freshness. The shell must be closed and intact, a sign that the animal inside is still alive.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.

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Capasanta / SCALLOP



The scallop is a bivalve mollusc in the *Pectinidae* family.
Its scientific name is *Pecten jacobaeus*.

MORPHOLOGY. Shell with two unequal, fan-shaped valves. There are two auricles. From the hinge, 16 to 18 ribs extend, separated by intercostal spaces. The upper valve is reddish-brown on the outside, the lower valve is whitish; the inside is whitish in colour at the centre, becoming reddish-brown towards the edges.

SIZE. To be sold, it must be at least 10 cm long.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Muddy and sandy seabeds.

SEASONALITY. All year round.

HOW TO FISH. With trawl nets, by hand.

QUALITIES. Tasty meat, eaten both cooked and raw, is of considerable commercial value. It is sold both fresh and frozen. When sold live, to ensure freshness, the shell must be closed, indicating that the animal inside is still alive. Products of foreign origin are always frozen.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.



Carpa / CARP

The carp is a freshwater fish belonging to the *Cyprinidae* family.
Its scientific name is *Cyprinus carpio*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a tall, stocky body, laterally compressed, with a convex back and a long dorsal fin. It has a triangular head with a mouth equipped with four barbels, used for searching for food on the bottom.

SIZE. Its length normally varies between 30 and 70 cm, and its weight varies between 3 and 40 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. It is a very versatile fish, widespread throughout Italy and the world.

HABITAT. The carp lives mainly in lakes, ponds, and the mid-to-lower reaches of rivers, but it can also adapt to brackish water and difficult habitats.

SEASONALITY. From spring to autumn, particularly from late March to late October/November.

HOW TO FISH. Nets and traps.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is white and firm. Nutritious and rich in protein, fatty acids, omega-3s, and vitamins, it is a suitable fish for athletes and convalescents.

NOTE. Due to its high uric acid content, it is not recommended for those suffering from gout. To eliminate the muddy taste from the flesh, you can immerse it for a few seconds in boiling salted water with a little vinegar or simply hold it under running water for a long time.



Cefalo or Muggine / MULLET

The mullet is a fish widespread in tropical and warm temperate seas. It belongs to a family of marine bony fish (*Mugilidae*) that includes species such as the thicklip grey mullet, and the golden grey mullet. Its scientific name is *Mugil cephalus*.

MORPHOLOGY. The body is slender and tapered with two short dorsal fins, the first of which has four spiny rays; it has very prominent adipose eyelids, large scales on the body, a small mouth with small or absent teeth, and very high-set pectoral fins; a grey, almost black back and silvery sides; a dark spot is present in the axils of the pectoral fins.

SIZE. Up to 50 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, particularly the Adriatic Sea and lagoon environments.

HABITAT. A gregarious species of temperate waters, during the spring it migrates to brackish waters, lagoons, and estuaries with soft bottoms and abundant vegetation.

SEASONALITY. From March to December.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, purse seines, and trawls. It is also farmed in valleys or lagoons.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is firm, delicate, sweet, and slightly fatty; however, it can acquire strong flavours due to its diet and habitat. In Sardinia, it is farmed in lagoons to produce "*bottarga*" (dried, salted, and smoked roe).



Cozza or Mitile / MUSSEL



The mussel is a bivalve mollusc widespread in our seas, of the *Mytilidae* family. Its scientific name is *Mytilus galloprovincialis*.

MORPHOLOGY. Elongated in shape, it has a purplish-black shell; the valves are domed, identical, almost triangular, and feature thin concentric striations. The interior colour is pearly-purple, and this can vary depending on the reproductive cycle and sex.

SIZE. Up to 10 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea.

HABITAT. Lives attached to rocks or hard substrates.

SEASONALITY. All year round.

HOW TO FISH. Mussels are mainly farmed, with only a small percentage caught on natural banks. Farming techniques vary depending on the environment: lagoon waters, ponds, protected marine areas, and the open sea. Fishing is carried out professionally by divers. Mussel farming is practiced using various technologies in the Adriatic, Ionian, central-northern Tyrrhenian, and Sardinian seas.

QUALITIES. Despite their low-calorie content, mussels have exceptional nutritional properties, with a low-fat content and a rich content of high-quality proteins, vitamins, and minerals.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.

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Dentice / DENTEX

The dentex is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Dentex dentex*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an oval shape, with a typical curvature on the snout and two protruding canines in both jaws. It has a tall, laterally compressed body. The profile of the head is rounded, and the eye is very small. It is grey blue on the back and silver on the sides, with golden sides of the snout; the fins are pink, while the ventral and anal fins are yellowish. There is a dark spot at the tip of the dorsal fin.

SIZE. Up to 1 m long and weighs 14 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean to Senegal.

HABITAT. The dentex lives at variable depths, up to 200 m. It prefers rocky and sandy seabeds, areas with seagrass meadows, cliffs, and shallows.

SEASONALITY. From June to November.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, longlines.

QUALITIES. It is one of the most delicious fish. The flesh of the dentex is slightly sweet, characterized by a succulent yet firm texture.

NOTE. There are several species on the market, each with varying values. The product is sold fresh or frozen.

**Fasolaro / SMOOTH CLAM**

The smooth clam is a mollusc belonging to the *Veneridae* family. Its scientific name is *Callista chione*.

MORPHOLOGY. Shell with two valves, the shape is oval, smooth, solid and coloured a beautiful orange-brown. Fine striations are present. Smooth inner edge. The internal mollusc has a very evident reddish colour.

SIZE. 7-11 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea and eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy bottoms, up to 20 m deep.

SEASONALITY. January, February, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Hydraulic dredge.

QUALITIES. The flesh has an intense and savoury flavour, with a delicate and characteristic sea aroma. When purchased, the shell must be closed, a sign that the animal is still alive.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.



Gallinella / TUB GURNARD

The tub gurnard is a fish belonging to the *Triglidae* family. Its scientific name is *Chelidonichthys lucerna*.

MORPHOLOGY. The colour on the back is red or brown, pink on the sides, and white in the centre. The lateral line is covered with wrinkled scales. The pectoral fins, with spots and a deep blue border, resemble bird wings.

SIZE. 30–60 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy bottoms up to great depths.

SEASONALITY. From April to October.

HOW TO FISH. Longline, gill nets, and trawling.

QUALITIES. Its meat is white and flavourful, but not abundant in relation to its weight. Lean fish, flesh rich in potassium, phosphorus, and vitamin D. It is mainly used to flavour seafood soups.

Gambero grigio / BROWN SHRIMP



The brown shrimp is a crustacean belonging to the *Crangonidae* family. Its scientific name is *Crangon crangon*.



MORPHOLOGY. A small, grey-brown crustacean that sometimes has black spots on its shell.

SIZE. Reaches a maximum size of 7 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean and Black Seas; also present in the eastern Atlantic Ocean, from Morocco to the White Sea.

HABITAT. Widespread on sandy bottoms and coastal meadows within 20 m of depth, also in lagoons and estuaries.

SEASONALITY. From spring to autumn, varies depending on the area.

HOW TO FISH. Fyke nets, fish traps, trawl nets.

QUALITIES. Highly prized, excellent-quality meat. In the culinary field, it is one of the most sought-after shellfish due to its delicate flavour.

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Gambero rosso / RED PRAWN



The red prawn is a marine decapod crustacean of the *Aristeidae* family. Its scientific name is *Aristaeomorpha foliacea*.

MORPHOLOGY. The red prawn has a bright red carapace with two long antennae.

SIZE. Commonly 15 cm long, it can reach a maximum of 20 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and western Pacific Ocean.

HABITAT. Lives hidden in muddy and sandy seabeds, usually between 200 and 1,000 m, with most frequent catches between 400 and 800 m.

SEASONALITY. From April to December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawling.

QUALITIES. Highly prized, its meat is fat-free and rich in high-quality proteins and mineral salts.



Ghiozzo nero / BLACK GOBY

The black goby is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Gobiidae* family. Its scientific name is *Gobius niger*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a stocky, elongated body, usually brown or black on the back and whitish on the belly, with dark spots and blotches that can vary during the breeding season. It is characterized by a high first dorsal fin, with elongated, threadlike rays in males. The ventral fins are oblong and joined.

SIZE. It can reach 15-16 cm in length.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea (very common in Italian lagoons and coastal areas), the Black Sea and the eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Found in fresh, brackish, and marine waters, on rocky, sandy, or muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. It's available year-round, but it's best not to eat it during the breeding season, which runs from January to June.

HOW TO FISH. Fyke nets, fish traps.

QUALITIES. Its meat is prized for its deliciousness.

NOTE. It can be eaten fresh, fried or not; its white, rather fatty meat has a delicate flavour, but it makes an excellent broth.



Granseola / SPIDER CRAB

The spider crab is a decapod crustacean in the *Majidae* family. Its scientific name is *Maja squinado*.

MORPHOLOGY. A large crab with a particularly hard, pinkish-yellow shell. Its legs are disproportionated to its heart-shaped, rounded body with serrations along the lateral margin ending with two wedge-shaped teeth; at the front, it has five pairs of legs, two of which end with sturdy claws.

SIZE. This crustacean can reach considerable dimensions, up to 25 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy bottoms up to 100 m deep.

SEASONALITY. The best time for consumption is the winter and spring months: November, December, April, May. Frozen products are available year-round.

HOW TO FISH. Pots, trammel nets, trawls.

QUALITIES. The flesh has a sweet and delicate flavour, with a tender texture and a high percentage of lean protein. The flesh is white and flavourful; it can be properly processed and sold rolled into vacuum-packed sticks.

NOTE. It is consumed fresh and can be kept alive in tanks until sold.

Granchio / CRAB



Crabs belong to the decapod crustacean family and the infraorder *Brachyura*, which in turn comprises numerous species.

MORPHOLOGY. A ten-legged crustacean, it is characterized by its robust carapace that protects its body. It has two powerful claws on its front legs, used for defence and hunting, and eight hind legs for movement. The carapace does not grow with the animal but undergoes a periodic moulting process during which it is more vulnerable.

SIZE. Size varies enormously, from a few millimetres to almost 3 m.

DISTRIBUTION. Lives in almost all aquatic environments in the world.

HABITAT. Both freshwater and saltwater. Some species are almost entirely terrestrial and live along the coasts.

SEASONALITY. Varies depending on the species and geographical area. Generally, crabs are active and most abundant in spring and autumn.

HOW TO FISH. Cage trap.

QUALITIES. The meaty part is present both in the claws (more valuable) and in the body (darker and more pronounced). It has a sweet and delicate flavour, with a tender and juicy texture.

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Granchio blu / BLUE CRAB



The blue crab is a crustacean in the *Portunidae* family. Its scientific name is *Callinectes sapidus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is a decapod crustacean with a bluish carapace and blue claws. In addition to its colour, it is characterized by a fifth pair of racket-shaped legs for swimming, a T-shaped abdomen in males and a broad one in mature females. It feeds on molluscs, crustaceans, and fish. It reproduces very quickly.

SIZE. It can reach 25 cm in width.

DISTRIBUTION. An alien species native to the Atlantic Ocean, it is steadily increasing throughout the Mediterranean Sea and Italy, favoured by the lack of predators.

HABITAT. It prefers coastal and lagoon environments. It adapts to different environmental conditions and is resistant to variations in salinity and temperature.

SEASONALITY. Warm, temperate months, from April to November.

HOW TO FISH. Cage traps with bait.

QUALITIES. The meat is white and tender. It has a delicate, slightly sweet flavour, with notes reminiscent of lobster. It is rich in protein, vitamins, and minerals, but low in fat.



Grongo / CONGER EEL

The conger eel is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Congridae* family. Its scientific name is *Conger conger*.

MORPHOLOGY. It resembles an eel, with a grey-brown back with bluish highlights and a whitish belly.

SIZE. Up to 2 m.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Canary Islands, North Sea.

HABITAT. Rocky seabeds, up to 1,000 m deep.

SEASONALITY. All year round.

HOW TO FISH. Pots, lines, longlines.

QUALITIES. Conger eel meat is tender and tasty but is not appreciated because it is difficult to clean due to the dense and untidy presence of spines, mostly concentrated on the underside of the fish.



Lampuga / DOLPHINFISH

The dolphinfish (also known as dorado, lampuki, or mahi-mahi) is a pelagic bony fish belonging to the *Coryphaenidae* family. Its scientific name is *Coryphaena hippurus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is a fast and agile pelagic fish with a long, compressed body. It feeds on fish or crustaceans and swims at high speeds (reaching 95 km/h). It is characterized by its bright colours, a long dorsal fin, a frontal crest in males, and rapid growth.

SIZE. In the Mediterranean Sea, it typically measures between 40 and 80 cm, with an average size ranging between 2 and 5 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Tropical and subtropical waters worldwide. In the Mediterranean Sea, it is found on the coasts of Sicily, Campania, and Sardinia.

HABITAT. It appears on the coast during the spawning season, typically towards the end of summer and the beginning of autumn.

SEASONALITY: From July to November.

HOW TO FISH. As it tends to congregate under floating objects purse seine nets are used.

QUALITIES. Pink, lean, flavourful, and firm flesh, ideal for various preparations.

NOTE. A low-fat fish, it requires special attention during cooking to prevent it from drying out.



Lanzardo / CHUB MACKEREL

The chub mackerel is a marine fish belonging to the *Scombridae* family. Its scientific name is *Scomber colias*.

MORPHOLOGY. Irregular greenish spots appear on the back, with greyish sides. Larger eyes than those of the common mackerel.

SIZE. Up to 40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. The species is found virtually worldwide.

HABITAT. Deep waters, lives in shoals.

SEASONALITY. Spring and summer, with a peak period from June to November.

HOW TO FISH. Nets, purse seine.

QUALITIES. Very rich in protein and omega-3 fatty acids, and quite fatty, as is typical of bluefish. It contains high amounts of sodium, phosphorus, and potassium, but also significant levels of good cholesterol.

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Latterino / SAND SMELT



The sand smelt is a small freshwater and marine fish belonging to the *Atherinidae* family. Its scientific name is *Atherina boyeri*.

MORPHOLOGY. Elongated, fusiform body covered in scales. Short snout, oblique mouth that reaches the front of the eye. Lower jaw more protruding than upper. Two dorsal fins, small, slightly forked caudal fin.

SIZE. 10-13 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea and eastern Atlantic Ocean in coastal and brackish waters.

HABITAT. It lives in large shoals.

SEASONALITY. Available for much of the year, with peaks in spring and summer.

HOW TO FISH. Fyke nets.

QUALITIES. Despite being a "poor" fish, it has remarkable organoleptic and nutritional characteristics. The flavour is slightly bitter, but very intense. It is sold fresh, frozen, canned.



Leccia / LEERFISH

The leerfish (or garrick) is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Carangidae* family. Its scientific name is *Lichia amia*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, laterally compressed body, which varies slightly depending on the species. Its colour is silvery or greenish grey with a swallow-shaped tail and a distinctive lateral line that makes it recognizable. Its skin is covered with very small scales.

SIZE. The most common size is between 40 cm and 1 m, but it can reach a maximum length of 2 m and a weight of about 50 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Typical of the eastern Atlantic Ocean, it is also found throughout the Mediterranean Sea, with the exception of the Black Sea.

HABITAT. It lives at variable depths, in sandy areas and near river mouths.

SEASONALITY. From April to October.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets and purse seines.

QUALITIES. The firm, white meat, with a delicate flavour, is highly prized in cooking and resembles that of amberjack.



Luccio / PIKE

The pike is a freshwater fish belonging to the *Esocidae* family. Its scientific name is *Esox lucius*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a long, slender body, slightly flattened on the sides, a duck-billed snout, and is known for its voracity.

SIZE. In Italy, it reaches about 15-20 cm in its first year, reaching 70-75 cm after eight years. Some adult specimens can exceed 1.35 m in length and weigh 20 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. In Italy, it is present in many lakes, rivers, and canals.

HABITAT. It prefers still or slow-flowing freshwater, with bottoms rich in vegetation, algae, and obstacles where it can hide while hunting.

SEASONALITY. From September to March.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. Pike meat is delicate and flavourful, especially that of young specimens, although it is generally quite dry.

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Mormora / SAND STEENBRAS

The sand steenbras is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Lithognatus mormyrus*.



MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, oval profile, with silvery yellow/grey skin crossed by vertical brown stripes on the sides that make it unmistakable.

SIZE. 20-35 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay, South Africa, Mozambique, Indian Ocean, Red Sea.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy and muddy coastal seabeds, as well as in ports.

SEASONALITY. From May to October.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. It has an excellent flavour, comparable to sea bass or dentex, but is bonier and more difficult to clean. It has lean, white meat, tasty and rich in proteins and mineral salts.



Moscardino / MUSKY OCTOPUS

The musky octopus is a cephalopod mollusc in the *Octopodidae* family, the same as cuttlefish and squid.

The scientific names of the two species found in the Mediterranean Sea are *Eledone cirrhosa* and *Eledone moschata*.

MORPHOLOGY. Oval, sac-shaped body with a distinct head. The tentacles have a single row of suckers. The two species are easily distinguished by their colour: one yellowish white, the other brownish.

SIZE. Up to 40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Common species in the Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. On muddy seabeds.

SEASONALITY. From January to March, from September to December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets.

QUALITIES. The flesh has a delicate flavour reminiscent of octopus, but more elastic. The smaller specimens are more tender. It is sold fresh and frozen.

NOTE. To determine its freshness, you must observe the colour of the mollusc; the brighter and more intense the colour, in its various shades, the greater its guaranteed freshness.





Murice / MUREX

The common murex is a gastropod mollusc belonging to the *Muricidae* family. Its scientific name is *Bolinus brandaris*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is a species with a rather large, yellowish-white or ashy shell and thick walls, equipped with spiny extensions.

SIZE. 6-8 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It lives along the coast and is common on sandy bottoms, up to a maximum of 100 m.

SEASONALITY. April, May, September, October, and November.

HOW TO FISH. Trawling and pots.

QUALITIES. The meat is highly prized. It can be mistaken for the spineless murex, a similar but less valuable mollusc.

NOTE. For sale, gastropods must be packaged, labelled, and bear the brand of the shipping facility.

Nasello / HAKE



The hake is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Merlucciidae* family. Its scientific name is *Merluccius merluccius*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated and slender body, with a large head and a pointed snout. It is characterized by two dorsal fins, a wide mouth with a prominent jaw and sharp teeth. Its colour is greyish brown on the back and silvery on the sides, fading to white on the belly.

SIZE. It averages 30-60 cm but can exceed 1 m in length.

DISTRIBUTION. Widely distributed in the Mediterranean Sea, the eastern Atlantic Ocean (from Iceland to Mauritania), and the southern Black Sea.

HABITAT. It prefers sandy or muddy bottoms. It is found at depths ranging from 30 to 100 m, but can reach depths of about 300-400 m. It travels in shoals, approaching the coast in summer and retreating offshore in winter.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawling, gill nets, and longlines.

QUALITIES. The flesh is lean, white, and somewhat watery; it flakes easily. It is sold whole, in slices, or fillets, and is suitable for all types of cooking.

NOTE. It is the representative of the cod family fished in the Mediterranean Sea.

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Occhiata / SADDLED SEABREAM



The saddled seabream is a saltwater fish of the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Oblada melanura*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elliptical body, an elongated snout with a small mouth and a slightly prominent lower jaw. Large, round eyes. Its back is grey-blue, and its belly is silvery. On the caudal peduncle is a large black spot bordered in white that does not reach the lower edge of the peduncle.

SIZE. Length is 15-30 cm. Weight reaches a maximum of 500 g.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay, from Gibraltar to Angola and Cape Verde.

HABITAT. In shallow waters on rocky or sandy bottoms among seaweed.

SEASONALITY. From May to September.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets and purse seines.

QUALITIES. The meat is high-quality, lean, white, and has a delicate flavour, like sea bream and white sea bream, but with more bones.



Ombrina / SHI DRUM

The shi drum is a common fish in the Mediterranean Sea, belonging to the *Sciaenidae* family. Its scientific name is *Umbrina cirrosa*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, laterally compressed body, with an arched back and a flat belly, a massive head. Its colour is silvery-grey with metallic highlights.

SIZE. Size varies depending on the species, generally between 30 and 70 cm, with a maximum weight of about 12 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, and Red Sea.

HABITAT. It prefers sandy bottoms but is also found on rocky and muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. January, February, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is white, delicate, lean, and highly prized.



Orata / GILTED SEA BREAM

The gilthead sea bream is a marine and brackish water bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Sparus aurata*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated, highly compressed oval body covered with large scales, a small mouth, with a curved golden band between the eyes. A faint golden-yellow spot shines on the gill covers, which have a rusty-purple spot on the upper edge.

SIZE. From 30 to 80 cm in length, it can weigh up to 17 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, British Isles, Strait of Gibraltar up to Cape Verde and around the Canary Islands. It is one of the most widely farmed fish in aquaculture.

HABITAT. It lives near the coast, on sandy bottoms or among rocks, up to 150 m deep. Also present in brackish waters and lagoons.

SEASONALITY. From April to October.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, longlines, trawls, purse seines.

QUALITIES. Its delicate, flavourful flesh is suitable for all types of cooking. It is among the most prized fish on the market.

NOTE. Farmed sea bream is darker in colour, uniform in size, and generally lacks the golden band between the eyes. It is sold fresh and frozen.

Ostrica / OYSTER



The oyster is a bivalve mollusk belonging to the *Ostreidae* family. Its scientific name is *Ostrea edulis*.



MORPHOLOGY. Mollusc with a very hard, rounded outer shell composed of two different valves. The outer shell is marked by thin growth rings.

SIZE. Up to 10 cm, but can reach up to 15 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea.

HABITAT. It lives attached to rocks along the coast or in nurseries. Other oyster species are farmed in many European coastal areas. Based on size, it is classified with a size that varies depending on the producing country.

SEASONALITY. It can be eaten year-round but is best in September and April.

HOW TO FISH. Farmed in facilities that simulate tidal cycles through periods of emergence and immersion of the animal.

QUALITIES. It is the most prized mollusc on the market, along with the sea truffle and the scallops. It is easily distinguishable, due to the essentially rounded shape of its valves, from other oysters available on our markets: the Portuguese oyster (*Crassostrea angulata*) and the Japanese oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*), both known as the cupped oyster, which have an elongated oval valve.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.

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Pagello Fragolino / PANDORA

The pandora is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Pagellus erythrinus*.



MORPHOLOGY. Medium-sized, its body is generally rounded in profile and compressed at the sides. Free of spots or streaks, it is pink or reddish in colour. The profile of its snout is less convex than that of the red porgy and the dentex.

SIZE. It can reach 60 cm in length.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean from the Canary Islands to Cape Verde, and rarely in Norway.

HABITAT. It lives in coastal waters, rocky, sandy, and muddy bottoms. In the Mediterranean Sea, up to 200 m, in the Atlantic Ocean up to 300 m.

SEASONALITY. All year round except May and June.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, longlines, trawling.

QUALITIES. Its white meat is prized for its delicate, sweet flavour.

NOTE. Sold fresh or frozen. Several lower-value species are available on the market.



Pagro / RED PORGY

The red porgy is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Pagrus pagrus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an oblong body, a very convex head profile, and a slightly elongated, rounded snout. A pinkish-red back, pink sides with silvery highlights, a white belly, and pink fins.

SIZE. 30-70 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean from Gibraltar to the Canary Islands and the British Isles. Western Atlantic Ocean from the coast of the United States, the Gulf of Mexico to the coast of Argentina.

HABITAT. It lives at depths ranging from 20 to 200 m, on sandy, gravelly, and scree bottoms.

SEASONALITY. December.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets and trawls, longlines.

QUALITIES. Firm white meat, highly prized. It is often confused with dentex.

NOTE. Sold fresh or frozen. Other species of Atlantic origin are also available on the market, but of lower value.



Palamita / BONITO

The bonito is a marine fish belonging to the *Scombridae* family. Its scientific name is *Sarda sarda*.

MORPHOLOGY. Elongated in shape, the bonito has a light blue back, silvery sides, and very small eyes. The dorsal fins are small and triangular, set close together, with the first fin sloping slowly backward. The mouth is large and wide. Blackish bands run longitudinally obliquely from the back along the sides.

SIZE. 30-80 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, North Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, from Colombia to Venezuela.

HABITAT. It lives deep in water but approaches the coast in spring.

SEASONALITY. April, May, June, July, August, September, October, and November.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, trawls, longlines, and purse seines.

QUALITIES. High in protein, its meat is flavourful, tender, and pink, like mackerel, but tastier.

Palombo / SMOOTH-HOUND SHARK

The smooth-hound is a shark that is not dangerous to humans belonging to the *Triakidae* family. Its scientific name is *Mustelus mustelus*.



MORPHOLOGY. Grey in colour with a whitish belly, the body is slender and tapered.

SIZE. It can reach 2 m.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Canary Islands, Madeira, South Africa.

HABITAT. It lives at depths of up to 600 m on muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. Year-round, but fishing is particularly widespread in the summer and autumn months.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, nets, longlines, pots.

QUALITIES. Tender, lean, and boneless meat, with a delicate flavour like that of white meat rather than fish.

NOTE. It is usually sold skinned.

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Papalina or Spratto / SPRAT

The sprat belongs to the *Clupeidae* family.
Its scientific name is *Sprattus sprattus*.



MORPHOLOGY. Fusiform body, oval on the ventral side, covered with large scales, very pronounced and serrated keel. Small mouth. Dorsal fin is located towards the centre.

SIZE. Up to 15 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, northeastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Lives in shoals at medium depths.

SEASONALITY. Available year-round, with a long fishing season; its peak is from October to March.

HOW TO FISH. Surrounding nets and trawls, flying system.

QUALITIES. Very tender, digestible meat, rich in omega-3, vitamin D and B12, low cost and low in calories. It is sold fresh. A very delicate fish that perishes easily.

NOTE. To distinguish it from a sardine, pick the fish by its dorsal fin: if it's a sprat, it remains straight; if it's a sardine, it tilts forward.



Pesce spada / SWORDFISH

The swordfish is a marine bony fish,
the only species in the *Xiphias* genus and the *Xiphiidae* family.
Its scientific name is *Xiphias gladius*.

MORPHOLOGY. With a long, streamlined body, it is primarily characterized by its upper jaw, which extends into a sharp, bony "sword," about a third of its total length.

SIZE. It can reach large sizes, exceeding 4 m in length and 500 kg in weight.

DISTRIBUTION. It is a cosmopolitan fish, of great commercial importance.

HABITAT. It inhabits tropical, subtropical, and temperate zones of all oceans. In the Mediterranean Sea, it is often found along the coasts. It prefers surface waters but can also be found in deep waters.

SEASONALITY. April, May, June, July, August, September, and October.

HOW TO FISH. Harpoon (on "spadare" or "feluccas" boats) and longline.

QUALITIES. Firm meat with a strong flavour, low in fat. Very prized when eaten ventrally, slightly fattier than that from the back. Sold in slices, especially for grilling.



Pesce persico / PERCH

The perch is a freshwater fish belonging to the *Percidae* family. Its scientific name is *Perca fluviatilis*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an oval-shaped body, covered in scales and with sharp fins. Its distinctive feature is the dark spot at the base of the dorsal fin.

SIZE. The average length is between 20 and 30 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. This fish has now almost disappeared from Italian lakes and rivers.

HABITAT. It prefers lakes, slow-flowing rivers, and ponds, but can also be found in brackish waters.

SEASONALITY. It can be caught year-round, with some restrictions for reproduction. The best season is from June to September.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. Its white, firm, compact flesh has a good flavour but is easily perishable.

Platessa / PLAICE



The plaice is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Pleuronectidae* family. Its scientific name is *Pleuronectes platessa*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is a flatfish, with an oval or rhomboid body. Its back is brown or brownish, with reddish or orange spots, while the underside is white. It lives lying on its left side, which is why its eyes are offset to the right.

SIZE. It reaches 40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. The Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It burrows into sandy or muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. It is found year-round, but the best season is from May to December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl or gill nets.

QUALITIES. Its delicate, white, lean, and highly nutritious flesh is particularly suitable for a light and healthy diet.

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Polpo / OCTOPUS

The octopus is a cephalopod mollusc belonging to the *Octopodidae* family. Its scientific name is *Octopus vulgaris*.



MORPHOLOGY. It has a globular, wrinkled body, with two large lateral eyes and eight arms with two rows of suckers. Its colour varies depending on the environment. Similar to the octopus is the musky octopus, less prized and recognizable by the single row of suckers on its arms.

SIZE. It reaches 50 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. It lives among the rocks near the coast, among the seagrass and on sandy detrital seabeds.

SEASONALITY. From January to April.

HOW TO FISH. Pots, trawl nets.

QUALITIES. The meat is rich in protein, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids, while being low in fat and calories.

NOTE. On the market it is available frozen and from abroad.





Rana pescatrice or Coda di rospo ANGLERFISH or MONKFISH

The anglerfish, or monkfish, is a fish belonging to the *Lophiidae* family. Two species are present in the Mediterranean Sea, and their scientific names are *Lophius piscatorius* and *Lophius budegassa*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a flattened head with a huge mouth. The body tapers into a triangle towards the tail. It has two large pectoral fins and filamentous dorsal fins. Its skin is smooth and scaleless.

SIZE. It can reach 1 m in length.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Barents Sea.

HABITAT. It is a bottom-dwelling fish (up to 500 m deep); it prefers muddy and sandy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. March, April.

HOW TO FISH. Trawls and gill nets.

QUALITIES. White meat, firm, flavourful, and highly prized, but becomes stringy if cooked too long.

NOTE. The main food is the tail (called monkfish), which can be sliced.

Ricciola / AMBERJACK

The amberjack is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Carangidae* family. Its scientific name is *Seriola dumerili*.



MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated body, compressed at the sides, with a large head and a wide mouth equipped with small teeth. It has two dorsal fins (the first with spiny rays) and a forked tail.

SIZE. The minimum legal length is 60 cm. However, it can reach 2 m in length, with specimens weighing up to 100 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. A cosmopolitan pelagic fish, it is found in all tropical and temperate seas around the world.

HABITAT. Found at depths between 18 and 70 m, but can live up to 385 m. During the winter, it moves to deeper waters.

SEASONALITY. From March to November.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets and purse seines.

QUALITIES. Comparable to that of other pelagic fish, the amberjack's flesh is white, lean, flavourful, and highly prized, yet delicate.

Rombo chiodato / TURBOT

The turbot is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Scophthalmidae* family. Its scientific name is *Scophthalmus maximus*.



MORPHOLOGY. Rhomboid body, with eyes offset to the left side and scaleless skin covered with leathery tubercles. Dark spots on the fins.

SIZE. It can reach 1 m in length.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, North Atlantic Ocean, Northern Europe.

HABITAT. Lives buried in sandy or muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. September, October, November.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, gill nets. Foreign fish may also be farmed.

QUALITIES. White, firm, delicate, and flavourful meat, with a slightly sweet taste.

**Rombo liscio / BRILL**

The brill is a marine fish belonging to the *Scophthalmidae* family. Its scientific name is *Scophthalmus rhombus*.

MORPHOLOGY. Its body is flat, ovoid, and very broad. Its ocular side is greyish brown in colour with numerous light and dark spots.

SIZE. It grows to 70 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, western Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea.

HABITAT. It lives buried in sandy or muddy seabeds.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, gill nets.

QUALITIES. Its white, tender, and flavourful flesh is easily digestible and rich in protein and minerals. It is less valuable than the turbot.



Salpa / SALEMA

The salema is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family. Its scientific name is *Sarpa salpa*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elliptical body, a short snout, and a small mouth with a somewhat prominent upper jaw. A black spot is located at the base of the pectoral fins. Its flanks are crossed by about ten golden yellow lines.

SIZE. From 20 to 40 cm in length, weighing up to 1.5 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay, from Gibraltar to Angola and Cape Verde, Congo, and South Africa.

HABITAT. It lives in shoals on shallow, muddy, rocky bottoms, feeding on algae.

SEASONALITY. From May to October.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets and purse seines.

QUALITIES. Its meat is not very flavourful, with a grassy and earthy flavour due to its seaweed-based diet.

San Pietro / JOHN DORY

The John Dory is a saltwater fish, a member of the *Zeidae* family. Its scientific name is *Zeus faber*.



MORPHOLOGY. It is an unmistakable, primitive-looking fish, with a large, oblique mouth, large, spiny spines on its dorsal fins, and two distinctive black spots bordered in white in the centre of its flanks. It has a very laterally compressed body with a large head.

SIZE. 30-60 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, North Atlantic Ocean, South Africa, Japan, and Australia.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy and muddy bottoms up to 100 m.

SEASONALITY. From January to April.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, gill nets, and longlines.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is white, very lean, tender, and flavourful.

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Sarago / WHITESEA BREAM



The white seabream is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Sparidae* family, common in the Mediterranean Sea. Its scientific name is *Diplodus sargus*.

MORPHOLOGY. White seabreams are elliptical in shape, with a silvery-grey or golden-yellow back and a conspicuous black ring at the base of their tail. They have a tall, laterally compressed oval body, a pointed snout with thick lips. They have five broad blackish bands along with a dark spot in the pectoral axillae and at the base of their tail.

SIZE. Up to 40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay.

HABITAT. Lives at shallow depths on rocky bottoms.

SEASONALITY. January, February, September, October, and November.

HOW TO FISH. Purse seines, gill nets, pots.

QUALITIES. The quality of the meat depends on the freshness of the fish: excellent when freshly caught, it tends to lose flavour over time.

NOTE. There are several species on the market with similar value. Sold fresh or frozen.



Sardina / SARDINE

The sardine is a marine bony fish of the *Clupeidae* family. Its scientific name is *Sardina pilchardus*.

MORPHOLOGY. This blue fish has a silvery blue back, silvery white sides, a slender and slender shape, large scales, and a caudal fin with a pronounced fork.

SIZE. It reaches a maximum length of 20 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, northeastern Atlantic Ocean, Senegal, Black Sea.

HABITAT. It lives deep in waters in winter, near the coast in summer.

SEASONALITY. From January to March.

HOW TO FISH. Purse seines, pelagic nets, and flying nets.

QUALITIES. It is among the cheapest fish; its flesh is very flavourful and quite fatty. Sardines are sold fresh, smoked, and canned.

NOTE. Similar to the sardine is the sprat, from which it can be distinguished by its smooth belly and striated operculum.



Scampo / LANGOUSTINE

The langoustine is a decapod crustacean in the *Nephropidae* family. Its scientific name is *Nephrops norvegicus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a pink-coloured carapace. It has an elongated, slender body, either pink or orange, two antennae, and two large, robust, spiny claws.

SIZE. It grows up to 25 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, North Sea, British Isles.

HABITAT. Muddy seabeds up to 400 m deep.

SEASONALITY. From March to July.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets.

QUALITIES. Its flesh is very delicate, soft, and flavourful. It should be eaten fresh to fully appreciate its delicacy. All crustaceans, after boiling, turn pink or red.

NOTE. It is also sold live to ensure its freshness. Smell it to make sure it doesn't smell of ammonia and the head isn't blackened. The colour should be uniform; dark patches indicate it's not fresh. Loss of freshness is especially evident in the flaccidity of the abdominal muscles, which also have a greenish colour. Only the tail, which has a very delicate flavour, should be eaten.



Scorfano / RED SCORPIONFISH

The red scorpionfish is a saltwater fish of the *Scorpaenidae* family. Its scientific name is *Scorpaena scorpha*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a stocky, bulky body characterized by a large, spiny head, with venomous spines on the operculum and dorsal fin. Its colour varies greatly to blend in with its surroundings.

SIZE. Up to 50 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean from the British Isles to Senegal, South Africa.

HABITAT. Sandy bottoms up to 400 m deep. Juveniles approach the coast in the winter months.

SEASONALITY. From January to June.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, trawls, longlines.

QUALITIES. Its white, firm, lean, flavourful meat is rich in protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and minerals.

NOTE. There are several lower-quality species on the market. The others are darker, brownish brown, and brown. The opercular spines are dangerous.

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Sepia / CUTTLEFISH



The cuttlefish is a decapod cephalopod mollusc in the *Sepiidae* family.

Its scientific name is *Sepia officinalis*.

MORPHOLOGY. The cuttlefish's body is symmetrical and sac-like. Its eyes are well-developed and it has a crown of arms with its mouth opening in the centre. Its back is striped, tending to olive grey. It has an ovoid, sac-like shape containing, in addition to a calcareous bone, vesicles of black liquid ("ink") used as a defence during escape.

SIZE. Up to 30 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Widespread throughout the world, but particularly in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas.

HABITAT. It lives on muddy bottoms at various depths.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, April, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, harpoon nets, pots, gill nets.

QUALITIES. Sweet, delicately flavoured meat.

NOTE. Sold fresh or frozen. Most foreign products are of inferior quality. The fishing method affects quality.



Sgombro / MACKEREL

The mackerel is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Scombridae* family. Its scientific name is *Scomber scombrus*.

MORPHOLOGY. Streamlined body with moderately large eyes; the back has transverse flexing lines with a cobalt blue or greenish back.

SIZE. 25-40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Northeast-West Atlantic, British Isles and Canary Islands.

HABITAT. It lives in deep waters, but in warmer months, it is found in large schools on the surface.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, purse seines, and lures.

QUALITIES. A typical blue fish, the mackerel, is very important for commercial fishing. It has excellent meat with a high fat content.

NOTE. It can be confused with the very similar but less valuable mackerel.





Sogliola / SOLE FISH

The common sole fish is a saltwater fish belonging to the *Soleidae* family. Its scientific name is *Solea solea*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is the most famous of the flatfish, with a tapered shape and small lateral fins. It has an elongated oval body, eyes on the right, and a greenish-brown or grey ocular side. The pectoral fin has a black spot at the tip.

SIZE. It reaches 40 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, North Sea.

HABITAT. It lives on sandy bottoms, buried deep, up to 100 m deep.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, September, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, rapid nets, and trawls.

QUALITIES. The sole is highly sought after for its prized, white, firm flesh. Before use, it is generally filleted.

NOTE. The black spot on the pectoral fin is a distinguishing feature from other soles.



Spigola or Branzino / SEA BASS

The sea bass is a species of marine and brackish water bony fish in the *Moronidae* family. Its scientific name is *Dicentrarchus labrax*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a slender body shape, with a large mouth equipped with multiserial teeth and a prominent mandible. It is leaden grey in colour, with a silvery belly. It is distinguished by the presence of two dorsal fins; the anterior one having pointed horny rays and a dark-spotted operculum.

SIZE. Up to 80 cm in length, it can weigh up to 12 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Adriatic Sea. Commonly farmed.

HABITAT. Up to 100 m deep on sandy bottoms, river mouths; often enters lagoons.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, October, November, and December.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, fly nets, longlines.

QUALITIES. Its lean, tender, and flavourful meat is suitable for all types of cooking. It has white flesh, with a light flavour and a slightly sweet aftertaste.

NOTE. Farmed sea bass has a higher protein and fat content than sea bass caught in the open sea. It is uniform in size and darker. It is sold fresh or frozen.

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Spinarolo / SPINY DOGFISH

The spiny dogfish is a saltwater shark belonging to the *Squalidae* family. Its scientific name is *Squalus acanthias*.



MORPHOLOGY. Slender, rather slender body, slate-grey back with purple highlights, and a whitish belly. The distinctive spine behind the dorsal fin, from which its name derives, is characteristic.

SIZE. Up to 1 m.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Russia, Sweden, South Africa.

HABITAT. Lives on sandy or muddy bottoms at depths from 0 to 1,500 m.

SEASONALITY. December.

HOW TO FISH. Nets, longlines.

QUALITIES. The meat has a delicate flavour. It is tender, digestible, and high in protein.

NOTE. Mostly sold skinned and in fillets.



Storione / STURGEON

The common sturgeon is one of the largest freshwater and brackish water fish found in Europe.

It belongs to the *Acipenseridae* family, and its scientific name is *Acipenser sturio*.

MORPHOLOGY. A prehistoric-looking fish, it is therefore considered a “fossil” species of fish. It has a slender, pentagonal body covered with five longitudinal rows of bony scutes. Its appearance may resemble that of a shark.

SIZE. Farmed specimens measure approximately 25-30 cm, reaching several meters in length, and the largest species weigh hundreds of kilograms.

DISTRIBUTION. The sturgeon is a mixed-water fish and lives primarily in the Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea, and North Sea; a thriving sturgeon farming industry is currently developing in Lombardy.

HABITAT. It lives in both fresh and marine waters in the Northern Hemisphere.

SEASONALITY. Year-round (farmed).

NOTE. It is also farmed for its prized caviar, obtained from its flavourful roe.



Sugarello / HORSE MACKEREL



The horse mackerel, or scad, is a marine bony fish of the *Carangidae* family.

Three species of the genus *Trachurus sp.* are present in the Mediterranean Sea.

MORPHOLOGY. Elongated, jointed, and fusiform body, slightly compressed at the sides. Silvery in color with a distinct lateral line.

SIZE. It can reach 50-60 cm in length, but the average size is about 30 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Very common in all Italian seas and the Mediterranean Sea. It is also found in the Black Sea.

HABITAT. It lives between 0 and over 1,000 m, but is most abundant between 100 and 200 m.

SEASONALITY. From March to November.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets and purse seines.

QUALITIES. Blue fish with firm, white flesh, digestible and flavorful.

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Tellina / TELLIN or WEDGE CLAM



Tellin is a genus of molluscs in the *Tellinidae* family.
Its scientific name is similar to its common name: *Tellina*.

MORPHOLOGY. It is a small bivalve mollusc with a triangular shell, smooth or with thin growth striations. The external colour varies from yellowish white to brownish purple, while the interior is whitish with purplish areas.

SIZE. It rarely exceeds 5 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. It lives in temperate waters, semi-buried between 0 and 2 m deep.

SEASONALITY. The best times for harvesting are spring and summer. They are fished year-round, except during the month of April, when there is a biological closure for reproduction.

HOW TO FISH. With manual rakes or from a boat in calm waters.

QUALITIES. Tender meat with a delicate flavour.

NOTE. The minimum size of 2 cm must be respected, and each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.



Tinca / TENCH

The tench is a freshwater fish belonging to the *Tincidae* family, of which it is the only member. Its scientific name is *Tinca tinca*.

MORPHOLOGY. Its back is dark green, while its sides and belly are lighter.

SIZE. On average, it is 20-40 cm long and weighs 500 g to 2 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. It lives throughout much of Italy and Europe, preferring calm, shallow freshwater waters.

HABITAT. It lives in slow-moving, stagnant, or farmed waters.

SEASONALITY. From April to October.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets.

QUALITIES. Its meat is white, firm, and rich in protein, but tends to have an intense flavour.

NOTE. Like carp, tench should be rinsed under running water to eliminate any possible muddy odour.



Tombarello / FRIGATE TUNA

The frigate tuna is a marine fish of the *Scombridae* family. Its scientific name is *Auxis thazard*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a robust, fusiform body, very similar to that of tuna but smaller. It is characterized by a dark blue back with irregular black markings, a silvery belly, and two widely spaced dorsal fins.

SIZE. It reaches a maximum length of about 50 cm and weighs about 1.5-2 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. A pelagic fish that inhabits all seas and oceans in temperate and tropical zones, with a strong presence in the Mediterranean Sea and Italian waters.

HABITAT. It often moves in shoals in both open and coastal waters.

SEASONALITY. April, May, September, and October.

HOW TO FISH. Purse seines and hand lines.

QUALITIES. Like tuna, its meat is red, flavourful, and nutritious, but commercially less valuable.



Tonnetto / LITTLE TUNNY

The little tunny is a marine fish belonging to the *Scombridae* family. Its scientific name is *Euthynnus alletteratus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a fusiform body, covered with smooth skin devoid of scales except for the pectoral armour and the lateral line. It is recognized by the characteristic dark coloration on its back.

SIZE. It can reach a maximum length of about 1 m and a weight of about 15 kg. Typical dimensions are around 40-70 cm in length and 15 kg in weight.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea and eastern and western Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. Found in both open and coastal waters.

SEASONALITY. August, September, and October.

HOW TO FISH. Purse seines and longlines.

QUALITIES. Like that of bluefin tuna, its flesh is sweeter and less fatty. It is appreciated for its delicacy.

Tonno / TUNA



Thunnus is a genus in the *Scombridae* family that includes eight species of large, pelagic predatory fish, commonly known as tuna. The most representative species of the Mediterranean Sea is the bluefin tuna, *Thunnus thynnus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has a robust body, particularly the anterior portion; the back is dark blue, bluish sides, and a silvery belly. The first dorsal fin slopes toward the rear.

SIZE. It can reach 2 m in length and 300 kg in weight.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Lofoten Islands, Ireland.

HABITAT. It lives in deep, clean water. It approaches the coast in spring.

SEASONALITY. April, May, and June.

HOW TO FISH. Tuna seiners, fixed tuna trawlers, and longlines.

QUALITIES. Its firm, reddish flesh is very nutritious and flavourful. The most prized part is called the belly, also used preserved in oil. It is also excellently eaten fresh.

NOTE. Tuna that is not very fresh should be avoided due to the risk of histamine, which is toxic to humans. Salted and compressed roe is an excellent bottarga.



Totano / FLYING SQUID

The flying squid is a cephalopod mollusk of the *Ommastrephidae* family. Its scientific name is *Illex coindetii*.

MORPHOLOGY. Its colour tends towards purplish white; it has a similar shape to squid and the same number of arms and tentacles but is distinguished by a small triangular fin at the tip of the sac.

SIZE. It reaches 1 m in length.

DISTRIBUTION. All seas, widespread in the Mediterranean Sea.

HABITAT. It swims over muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. January and December.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, gill nets.

QUALITIES. Good, firm flesh. Sold fresh and frozen. It is often confused with squid, but its gastronomic value is lower due to its tougher flesh.

NOTE. It is widely sold frozen and sliced into rings. Low-value Atlantic species are available on the market, mostly ringed. To determine freshness, observe the colour of the mollusk: the more vivid and intense the colour, in its various shades, the greater its freshness. Like all cephalopods, it must be skinned and cleaned before cooking.



Triglia / RED MULLET

The red mullet is a marine bony fish belonging to the *Mullidae* family, common in the Mediterranean Sea. Its scientific names are *Mullus surmuletus* (rock mullet) and *Mullus barbatus* (mud mullet).

MORPHOLOGY. Elongated and slightly compressed laterally, it is characterized by two barbels under its chin, which it uses to search for food, and by the red-orange or pink coloration on its sides. The two species are distinguished by the more vivid coloration and the more pronounced head profile of the rock mullet.

SIZE. It usually measures between 20 and 25 cm, but can reach a maximum length of approximately 30–40 cm. The minimum commercial length is 11 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and eastern Atlantic Ocean, from the English Channel to Senegal.

HABITAT. Usually found near the coast, in shallow waters. It prefers rocky bottoms and sandy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. January, February, March, September, October, and November.

HOW TO FISH. Gill nets, trawl nets.

QUALITIES. The flesh is white, flavourful, and very fine.

NOTE. Although similar in quality, mud mullet and rock mullet differ slightly in flavour, as they inhabit diverse environments.

Trota / TROUT



Trout is a freshwater salmonid fish that comes in several varieties.

The main ones are brown trout, marble trout, mediterranean trout, and rainbow trout.

The rainbow trout is a freshwater and marine bony fish belonging to the *Salmonidae* family.

Its scientific name is *Oncorhynchus mykiss*.

MORPHOLOGY. Trout has a tapered shape, with a speckled colouration that varies depending on the variety and the area in which it lives.

SIZE. Three sizes are commercially available, ranging from a minimum of about 500 g to a maximum of over 1.2 kg.

DISTRIBUTION. Found in Europe, Asia, and North America.

HABITAT. Varies depend on the species. In general, it prefers cold, clean, well-oxygenated waters with little current.

SEASONALITY. Year-round (farmed).

HOW TO FISH. Loved by sport fishermen, it is primarily farmed.

QUALITIES. The flesh of trout is white, lean, and has an intense flavour depending on whether it is wild or farmed. Salmon trout is simply a common trout fed a feed rich in carotenoids, which gives its flesh a pinkish hue.

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Vongola verace / CARPET-SHELL CLAM

The carpet-shell clam is a bivalve mollusc in the *Veneridae* family. Its scientific names are *Ruditapes decussatus* (a native species of the Mediterranean Sea) and *Ruditapes philippinarum* (a non-native species, but very important for farming).



MORPHOLOGY. Its robust shell consists of two identical, rounded valves. The external shell is light brown or greyish yellow, with rays that are dotted, striated, or composed of dotted or zigzag lines. The internal colour of the valves is white or yellowish, and the shell is smooth.

SIZE. Its maximum size is 5 cm, but the dimensions of commercially available clams vary between 2.5 cm and 3.5 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Caspian Sea, eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. The clams live buried in sandy or sandy-muddy coastal seabeds, generally up to 12 m deep, with only their siphons protruding.

SEASONALITY: All year round except May and June.

HOW TO FISH. The carpet-shell clam is primarily farmed, while the striped venus clam ("*lupino*") is caught professionally using a clam digger or hydraulic dredge.

QUALITIES: Its flesh has a delicate flavour and is considered a nutritious food, also suitable for low-calorie diets. Highly prized, it is sold fresh, frozen, in ready-made jars, and deep-frozen.

NOTE. Each package must bear the EEC health mark, which guarantees the product's provenance and its food safety.



Zerro / CURLED PICAREL

The curled picarel is a marine bony fish of the *Centracanthidae* family. Its scientific name is *Centracanthus cirrus*.

MORPHOLOGY. It has an elongated and laterally compressed body, oval in shape and silvery in colour, with a rectangular black spot on the side and the ability to elongate its mouth. It is a gregarious species but becomes solitary during the reproductive season.

SIZE. It reaches a maximum length of approximately 20-25 cm.

DISTRIBUTION. Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and eastern Atlantic Ocean.

HABITAT. It lives in schools, often near seagrass meadows, but also on sandy or muddy bottoms.

SEASONALITY. It can be caught year-round, but it is in season from April to September.

HOW TO FISH. Trawl nets, gill nets, purse seines, and pots.

QUALITIES. Although their quality varies, the flesh of the mullet is considered a nutritious food, valued in many parts of Italy.

NOTE. Dried and grated the curled picarel is a delicacy of Sicilian cuisine.

Some additional useful information



REMEMBER THAT...

When you're at the fish counter, you can **change the fate of our seas**. So, before you make your purchases, consider these tips:

IS IT A LOCAL PRODUCT?

In the Mediterranean Sea, you can choose from a wide range of **local and artisanal fisheries**. Contact the **fishermen** in the ports and marinas closest to your home or your trusted **fishmonger** to find out **which species are caught in your area**. Consuming local fish means choosing seasonal products. This good habit also promotes greater variety in the choice of fish species to purchase. Consuming local fish absolutely guarantees greater freshness, if the cold chain has been properly managed along the supply chain. With your purchasing choices, you can try to financially support the fishing and aquaculture businesses in your area, especially **small-scale artisanal fishermen**. Especially in a time of crisis like this, it is precisely the local businesses still tied to tradition that suffer the most. With this type of purchase, you will help your local businesses recover, consolidate, and continue to operate locally.

LEARN TO TASTE DIVERSITY

Diversifying the fish you eat ensures more balanced pressure on marine resources, which promotes the maintenance of biodiversity and makes marine ecosystems stronger. In the Mediterranean Sea, there are **over 500 edible fish species**, but only about twenty are the ones consumers typically prefer. Learn to choose even the less common and lesser-known species.

EAT ONLY ADULT FISH

A fish that is too young hasn't had time to reproduce. Ask your fishmonger to verify that you're buying adult fish or **ask about the minimum sizes for sale**. By doing so, you'll help maintain fish stocks.

CHECK THE ORIGIN ON THE LABEL

In the European Union, you have the right to know the full name of the fish you're buying, its origin, whether it was caught or farmed, and whether it's fresh or thawed. If you don't have this information, ask. If you don't get a response, don't buy the product. **Buy consciously.**

IF YOU HAVE TO BUY IMPORTED PRODUCTS, REMEMBER TO CHOOSE CERTIFIED ONES

When choosing seafood from abroad and offered by large-scale retail retailers, it's important to purchase **MSC (Marine Stewardship Council)**, **ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council)**, **Friends of the Sea**, or **organic fish** if you want to ensure a sustainable choice.

THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MOST COMMON FISHING TECHNIQUES

TRAILED NET FISHING

How it works. The vessel tows long, wide nets along the seabed or in the water column.

Purpose. To catch large quantities of demersal fish, i.e., fish in close contact with the seabed, such as cod, sole, crustaceans, or pelagic fish, such as anchovies and sardines.

Main gear. Bottom trawls or large-mesh nets, and so-called flying nets.

Characteristics. It is very productive but can have significant environmental impacts.

FISHING WITH GILL NETS OR TRAPS

How it works. Nets or traps are placed on the seabed or on the surface and left in place for a certain period.

Purpose. To catch crustaceans, molluscs, bottom-dwelling fish, cuttlefish, and various crustaceans.

Main gear. Traps or pots, longlines, fixed nets.

Characteristics. It is a passive technique, requiring less movement of the vessel.

SEINE FISHING

How it works. A circular net is used that surrounds the fish and is then raised onto the boat.

Purpose. To catch gregarious species such as sardines, anchovies, tuna, squid, or cuttlefish.

Main gear. Purse seine nets.

Characteristics. It is very effective for mass surface catches.

TURBO-BLOWER DREDGES OR RAKES

How it works. Rakes or serrated grids are towed along the seabed.

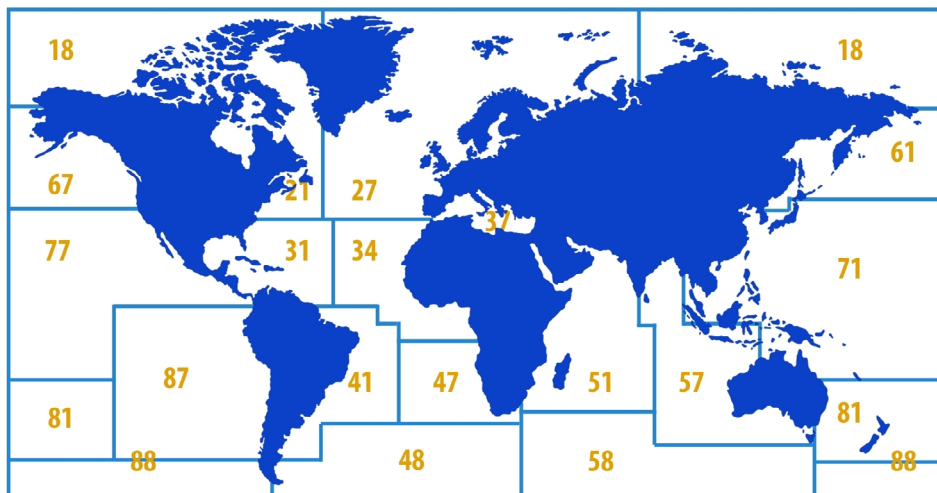
Purpose. To capture bivalve molluscs found under the sand.

Main gear. Hand rakes of various sizes or boats equipped with a serrated metal cage and a hydraulic system for pumping seawater.

Characteristics. This type of fishing is specifically designed to catch clams, razor clams, cockles, and other similar organisms.



THE WORLD MAP OF THE FISHING AREAS (FAO)



Northwest Atlantic

FAO Area 21

Southeastern Atlantic

FAO Area 47

Northeast Atlantic

FAO Area 27

Mediterranean Sea

FAO Area 37

Baltic Sea

FAO Area 27.III.d

Black Sea

FAO Area 37,4

Western Central Atlantic

FAO Area 31

Indian Ocean

FAO Area 51 e 57

Eastern Central Atlantic

FAO Area 34

Pacific Ocean

FAO Area 61, 67, 71, 77, 81 e 87

Western South Atlantic

FAO Area 41

Atlantic Ocean

FAO Area 48, 58 e 88

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE FRESHNESS OF FISH

CHARACTERISTICS	FRESH FISH	NOT FRESH FISH
		
ODOUR	Delicate and pleasant, seafood	Acrid, ammoniacal, repugnant
GENERAL APPEARANCE	Shiny, metallic, iridescent	Faded, without reflections
BODY	Stiff	Flaccid and with an abdomen that feels "empty" to the touch
CONSISTENCY	Firm, turgid	Soft and yielding to the touch, it leaves marks when pressed
SCALES	Well-fitting and shiny	Raised and dull, they peel off easily
SKIN	Colored and taut	Wrinkled, faded, flaking
EYE	Clear, protruding, "lively" eye, black pupil	Dull, sunken, dry
GILLS	Red and pink, clearly identifiable lamellae, turgid and without mucus	Dark gray-brown, mucous and withered gills
ANUS	Barely visible	Open
BOWELS	Clearly distinguishable, consistent	Soft and decaying
FISHBONE	Well attached to the flesh	Easily removable
FLESH	Firm-elastic	Soft, fraying

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE FRESHNESS OF BIVALVE MOLLUSCS

CHARACTERISTICS	ALIVE AND VITAL	ALIVE BUT NOT VITAL	DEAD
			
STATE OF THE VALVES	Closed or, if open, they close immediately when stimulated	Open in a high percentage, they close slowly if stimulated	Open in a significant percentage, they do not close
REACTIVITY TO STIMULI	Present and ready	Present but poor	Absent
INTERVALVE WATER QUANTITY	Discrete	Poor	Traces or absent
INTERVALVE WATER QUALITY	Good-smelling and transparent	No odor or slightly fecaloid or cloudy	Smelly
ADHESION OF THE MOLLUSK TO THE SHELL	Normal	Poor	Absent

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH FISH LABELS? DO YOU KNOW HOW TO READ THEM?

Labels are a **tool for informed purchasing** and ensure greater consumer protection. On December 13, 2014, EU Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers came into force, concerning the labeling of food products, including fish.

The requirement to display labels applies to all fish products (whether fresh, chilled, frozen, or packaged) and wherever they are sold (at local markets, fishmongers, supermarkets, etc.).

For **FISH IN GENERAL**, the label must show the following mandatory information:

COMMERCIAL NAME

of the fish species in Italian, which must always be as detailed as possible.

SCIENTIFIC NAME OF THE SPECIES

Behind each scientific name is one and only one fish species, with its own characteristics regarding minimum commercial size, reproduction, fishing season, and exposure to extinction.

PRODUCTION METHOD

Specifically, it involves "wild-caught" or "freshwater-caught" or "farmed" fish.

USED GEAR

Category of fishing gear used.

THE AREA

in which it was caught or farmed. It is no longer indicated with an alphanumeric code (e.g., FAO Area 37) but with the full name of the catch area "Mediterranean Sea" to make it more understandable to consumers. Each FAO Area is divided into sub-areas and subdivisions to better identify the fishing area.

STORAGE

- Storage status: **fresh / refrigerated / frozen / thawed**.
- Storage method depending on storage status: if the fish is **fresh/ refrigerated**, the label must indicate that it should be stored in the refrigerator, indicating the storage temperature, or at a temperature close to that of melting ice. If the fish is **frozen**, the label must contain the percentage of glaze and an explicit indication that refreezing is prohibited. If the fish is **thawed**, the label must contain the warning "do not refreeze the product; keep it refrigerated and consume within 24 hours."
- The minimum shelf life, preceded by the words "best before day/ month/year." For more delicate and perishable products, the precise expiration date must be indicated.
- The catch date (optional).



For **FARMED FISH**, the label must include the following mandatory information:

COMMERCIAL NAME

of the fish species in Italian, which must always be as detailed as possible.

SCIENTIFIC NAME OF THE SPECIES

Behind each scientific name is one and only one fish species, with its own characteristics regarding minimum commercial size, reproduction, fishing season, and exposure to extinction.

PRODUCTION METHOD

Specify the type of farming: intensive, semi-intensive, or extensive.

COMPANY NAME

and address of the manufacturer or importer marketing the product.

The diagram shows a blue rectangular label with white borders. It is divided into several sections. At the top, a large box contains 'COMMON NAME' and 'SCIENTIFIC NAME'. Below this, a box contains three checkboxes: 'INTENSIVE', 'SEMI-INTENSIVE', and 'EXTENSIVE'. The label is further divided into four quadrants: 'MANUFACTURER' (top-left), '€/KG' (top-right), 'BREEDING AREA' (bottom-left), and 'CONSERVATION' (bottom-right). Dashed arrows point from the surrounding text blocks to these specific fields on the label.

PRICE PER KILOGRAM

COUNTRY OF FARMING

For example, Italy. The specific location may also be indicated. The country where the fish reached its final weight or the country where it was farmed for more than half of its farming time must be indicated.

STORAGE

- Storage status: **fresh / refrigerated / frozen / thawed**.
- Storage method: refrigerate, indicating the storage temperature, or store at a temperature close to that of melting ice.
- Expiration date: use by (day-month-year).
- Capture date (optional).

For **BIVALVE MOLLUSCS**, the label must show the following mandatory information:

