



**FISHWATCH** FRESH FACTS.  
SMART SEAFOOD.

## EASTERN OYSTER



Native to the entire East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern oyster has been a big contributor to the majority of wild commercial harvests in the Chesapeake Bay and Louisiana. Since the 1800s, oyster farming has been around in the United States and today, oyster farming makes up a large portion of our marine aquaculture, bringing in millions of dollars every year.

Oysters naturally improve their local environment. As suspension feeders, they get their nutrients from microscopic algae suspended in the water column. They are highly efficient at removing excess nutrients from the water and contribute to high water quality in the surrounding area.

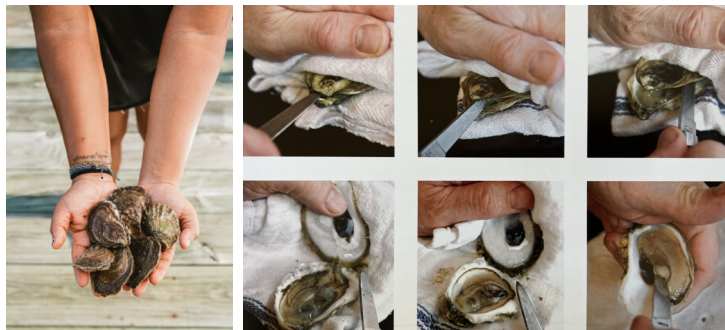
As with all aquaculture practices in the United States, much care is taken to ensure that the seafood sold is sustainable and safe to eat. Program and regulations enforce regular monitoring of shellfish practices to provide ocean-friendly seafood to consumers.

Oysters are an excellent source of protein, containing heart- and brain-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and low amounts of saturated fat. Just one oyster contains about 28 percent of the recommended daily allowance of iron, making oysters a healthy and sustainable protein choice.

[www.fishwatch.gov](http://www.fishwatch.gov)



# How to Shuck an Oyster



1. Wash your oysters thoroughly under cold running water, scrubbing the outside of the shells. Do not let them sit in the water; move them to a cutting board. Prepare a platter by lining it with a few paper towels and then covering the platter with crushed ice.
2. Place an oyster cup-side down on a towel. Fold the towel partway over the top of the oyster, making sure the hinge is exposed. This will protect your non-shucking hand.
3. Hold the oyster down firmly against the surface with the palm of your non-shucking hand. The towel should create a barrier between your hand and the oyster.
4. Place the tip of a shucking knife inside the hinge between the top and bottom shells. Push the tip into the hinge; twist the knife back and forth until you feel the hinge pop.
5. Open the top shell of the oyster just enough to slide the oyster knife along the inside of the top shell to loosen the meat from the shell.
6. Holding the oyster level so the liquor does not run out, carefully loosen the bottom muscle from its shell, so the oyster is "floating" in the cup of the bottom shell.

Find these instructions and seafood recipes in *The Row 34 Cookbook: Stories and Recipes from a Neighborhood Oyster Bar* by Jeremy Sewall

FishWatch is a consumer education product of NOAA Fisheries.



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