

# BLUE CRAB

Blue crabs are agile swimmers and usually swim sideways, sometimes backwards and forward. The paddle shaped fifth pair of legs rotate like propellers for swimming. They have long pinchers to catch fast moving prey. They cannot survive for long periods out of the water.

They stay buried under sand or mud most of the time, particularly during the daytime and winter. They come out to feed during high tide on various organisms. Blue crabs are harvested with traps, nets and dredges and, are found in brackish estuaries and bays.

For hard-shell crabs the larger, meatier males, called "jimmies", are more desirable. The apron, the shape on the belly, of a male is T-shaped. On a young female (or she-crab), the apron is triangular and a mature female crab (or sook) has a semicircular apron. Soft shell are separated by size, not sex, with the largest called whales, then jumbos and then primes.

Fresh-picked blue crab is sold in America in 1 pound plastic containers and kept on ice. Canned pasteurized crabmeat is common in retail markets but less desirable because the meat tends to be stringy.

## Cooking & Handling

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 87	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	1%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 78mg	26%
Sodium 293mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 18g	

Store live crabs and soft shells at 50°F, protected by layers of dampened newspaper. If kept too cold or too hot, the crabs will die. Don't freeze crabmeat because it will get stringy. Softshells may be found frozen.

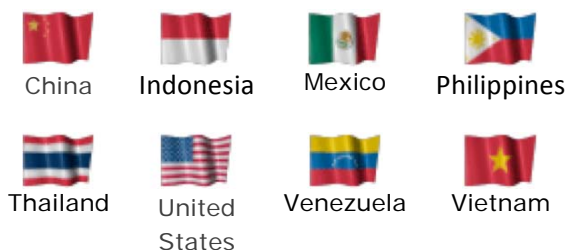
Blue crab is a good source of protein and Omega-3 fats, with low calories, vitamin B, vitamin B9, no saturated fat and no trans fat.

Flavors that work well with blue crab are almond, butter, capers, chervil, lemon, lime, orange, parsley, red chiles, saffron, scallion, shallot, tarragon, thyme, tomato, white vermouth and white wine.

## Cooking Methods

Boil, Broil, Fry, Grill, Sauté, Steam

## Global Supply:



## Seasonal Availability

Live crab is available from April through November in the Chesapeake area. Live softshells are available mid-May through mid-September. Frozen are available year-round.



## Scientific Name

Callinectes sapidus; Portunus pelagicus

## Market Name

blue crab, swimming crab

## Common Names

blue crab, hardshell crab, softshell crab, blue swimming crab

## Substitutions

other crab species, lobster meat

French	crabe bleu
German	blaukrabbe
Italian	granchio nuotatore
Japanese	gazami
Spanish	cangrejo azul

## Raw Characteristics

- olive-green top shell with white underbelly; white meat
- blue-tipped claws (male); orange-tipped claws (female)
- market size 4-6 inches across

## Cooked Characteristics

- rich, sweet, succulent and buttery taste
- body meat is delicately flavored; claw meat is nutty flavored
- cooked shells turn orange-red
- body meat is white, tender and flaky; claw meat has a brownish tint
- pasteurized meat is firmer and darker than fresh meat

## DID YOU KNOW?

Pregnant blue crabs carry their eggs in a sponge-like protrusion; to conserve the blue crab population and ensure their future, harvesting crabs with this protrusion visible is illegal.

Over its 2- to 3-year life span, a blue crab outgrows and sheds its shell about 20 times. Once the crab has molted, the new shell takes about 4 days to harden. Just after shedding, the crab's shell is soft enough to eat.