



# SEAFOOD 101

## LINGCOD

## THE BASICS

### Market Name

It is sometimes spelled ling cod, although the one-word spelling is scientifically favored. Lingcod is not a true cod, but a member of the family Hexagrammidae, the most commercially important of the greenlings found in the Pacific.

### Harvest Method:

Lingcod is harvested by both hook and line trollers and trawl net. Local Ocean prefers hook-and-line caught fish.

### Season:

Hook and line fishery occurs in the spring and summer. The trawl fishery operates year round.

### Stock Status:

Population status is highly debatable. Off shore stock assessments suggest the species is in serious decline, hence the strict harvest limits put on the hook and line boats. Nearshore fishermen claim that the off shore stock assessment do not reflect the abundance of fish they see at shallower depths. The National Marine Fishery Service states that population levels of lingcod off the west coast (Washington to California) are well above target levels.

### Home Range:

Alaska to California.

### Management:

Management measures include trip limits, commercial size limits, seasonal closures, and gear restrictions.

## VITALS

### Quality Issues

The quality – and the price – of lingcod will vary depending upon the method of harvest. Local Ocean buys from hook-and-line boats that bleed and ice their fish immediately after it is caught.

Trawl-caught lingcod is seldom bled, however if the fish is chilled and delivered in a few days its quality will still be fine, although its flesh will not be as white as a hook and line fish that was promptly bled.

Some lingcod, especially smaller fish caught near shore, will have a bluish-green tinge to their fish. Although it can be alarming to consumers, this fish will cook up just as white as any lingcod. Scientists are unsure about what causes the color differentiation, but it's probably a combination of diet and genetics.

When inspecting whole fish, dull eyes and faded gills may indicate fish is not as fresh as it should be. When inspecting fillets grayish flesh color and blood spots indicate bruising and mishandling. Yellowing indicates fat is going rancid. Any bad odor means the fish is not fresh and should not be consumed.



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## VITALS

### Flavor Profile

High fat content lends to a moist, flaky fillet. Lingcod is less firm and more flavorful than halibut. It is more firm than rockfish.

### Preparation

In the kitchen, lingcod are a very versatile fish, with a beautiful white, flaky flesh. At Local Ocean lingcod is the favorite fish to grill for fish and chips. If barbequeing, it is best to place fish on foil, as it may flake apart and fall through the grill.

### Sustainability

#### Monterrey Bay Aquarium (MBA) Yellow Light

Because lingcod are fast-growing and mature early, they are moderately resistant to fishing pressure. Because we know little about the actual stock abundance, it is considered a “good alternative” by MBA.

## FREQUENTLY GIVEN ANSWERS

### What’s the individual quota (IQ) management system?

There is a movement in the US and worldwide to privatize fishing privileges with individual quotas (IQ). In an IQ system, each permit-holder is allocated a percentage of the total quota for the season. Guaranteed a certain number of fish, a skipper can decide the best time to fish given market and weather conditions, thus ending the “race for fish.” Although there are management efficiencies, conservation and safety benefits inherent in such a system, many fishermen are concerned. Their concerns include the potential of a majority of the quota consolidating in the hands of a few corporations, the loss of opportunity for smaller vessels, and loss of fleet diversity. By US law, fish are a public resource. The conversion of public goods to private property will not go without controversy.

## FUN FACTS

Of the 47 types of cod in the world, three species are primarily sold on the West Coast: **true cod**, **lingcod** and **black cod** (and only one of them is truly a “cod”- can you guess which one?).

Cod is a species over which wars have been fought and trading fortunes made for **hundreds of years**. Found throughout the North Pacific and North Atlantic, cod is the world’s second largest whitefish resource after Alaska pollock.

Atlantic cod (also known as scrod or whitefish) is considered severely overfished and is in rebuilding stages.

Equipped with an impressive set of teeth and a huge mouth, lingcod are **exceptionally voracious feeders**, who are normally found near rock piles and kelp beds.

**Lingcod can live for about 20 years**, and many lingcod grow to a large size; a 30-pound fish is not rare, and giants up to 80 pounds are reported from time to time. As fish get larger their flesh becomes softer. Local Ocean prefers to buy male fish around 15 pounds.



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