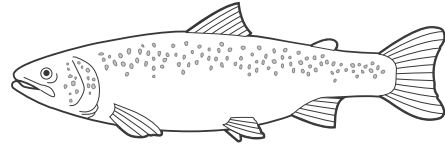


# Atlantic Salmon

*Salmo salar*

Atlantic salmon, also known as sea-run salmon, kelts, and black salmon, are anadromous finfish in the Salmonidae family. Anadromous fish start their lives in freshwater and migrate to saltwater, returning to freshwater to spawn. Atlantic salmon are the only salmon species found in the Atlantic Ocean. They are native to the North Atlantic Ocean and coastal streams of North America and Europe and landlocked populations have been documented.<sup>1,2</sup> They can be found in coastal waterways, freshwater streams, and lakes. They have long silver bodies with small black spots, appearing brownish from above. During spawning, males turn bronzy-purple with red spots and develop a hook-like lower jaw, known as a “kype.”



## Where do the Atlantic Salmon products I eat come from?

Atlantic salmon cannot be commercially harvested or kept by recreational fishers in US waters. They are a protected species and, in some places like the Gulf of Maine, are listed as endangered and protected under the Endangered Species Act. The majority of Atlantic salmon sold domestically are farmed in net pens outside of the US and imported.<sup>3</sup> Net Pens are used for raising fish in large water bodies and are commonly found in marine environments. Atlantic salmon are also cultured in land-based, environmentally-controlled buildings using recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS). RAS technology is not new, but the recent scaling of commercial Atlantic salmon farms is. Atlantic salmon are farmed in many countries, including the US.

## Why eat Atlantic Salmon?

- Source of Protein<sup>4</sup>
- Vitamins (A & D)
- Minerals (calcium)
- Omega 3 Fatty Acids<sup>3,4,5</sup>

## Are Atlantic salmon safe to eat?

Scientific findings have shown that metals, like mercury, and organic compounds (e.g., Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins) in farmed and wild Atlantic salmon do not occur in levels that pose a threat to human health,<sup>4</sup> with organic compounds levels lower in farmed Atlantic salmon compared to wild.<sup>3,5</sup> Scientists and government agencies have concluded Atlantic salmon is safe to eat.<sup>6,7</sup> Astaxanthin, the pigment that affects fillet color, comes in two forms– natural and synthetic. Both are non-toxic.

## To learn about seafood safety, visit:

USDA Selecting and Serving Fresh and Frozen Seafood  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/selecting-and-serving-fresh-and-frozen-seafood-safely>

## To learn more about wild Atlantic Salmon status & recovery, visit:

NOAA Fisheries: Atlantic Salmon (Protected) In the Spotlight  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/atlantic-salmon-protected#spotlight>

# Easy Baked Salmon

Prep Time: 10 minutes / Start to finish: 25 minutes

## Serves: 4

1 lb salmon or trout fillet(s)  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 pinch ground pepper  
2 tsp minced garlic  
1 tsp Italian seasoning  
1 lemon  
4 sprigs fresh thyme  
(optional)

## Cooking Tips

To fully enjoy all textures and flavors, select a cross-cut steak. Skin may be left on and crisped. Salmon can be sautéed, poached, slow roasted, baked, grilled, or smoked. Pair with bold, rich flavors like garlic, red pepper flakes, butter, or lemon and herbs like tarragon, thyme, fennel, dill, cilantro, rosemary, bay leaves, basil, sage, and parsley.

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and grease a large baking pan.
2. Place fillet in the baking pan and season with salt and pepper. For skin-on fillets, place the fillet skin side down in the baking pan. If you are starting with one large portion, you can cut it into 4 equal portions before cooking to make serving fast and simple.
3. Stir together olive oil, garlic, herbs, and juice of 1/2 a lemon.
4. Drizzle olive oil mixture over salmon fillets and rub all over the tops and sides of the salmon.
5. Thinly slice remaining 1/2 of lemon and put lemon slices on top of the fillet.
6. Bake for 12–15 minutes or until the fillet is opaque in color, flakes apart easily when you apply a little pressure with a fork, and the internal temperature is 145°F. The cooking time will depend on the thickness of the fillet. The thicker the fillet, the longer it will take to cook.
7. Garnish with thyme and serve with a wedge of lemon.

