

Buying and Preparation Tips

★ Be sure you purchase 100% pure American blue crabmeat. American blue crabmeat is identified by the oval USA American Blue Crab label - just like the one on the front of this brochure.

★ Some processors are mixing prized blue crabmeat with the Asian import, "swimming blue crab," and some containers labeled "crabmeat" contain only imported "swimming blue crab." The two meats are not the same in taste or appearance. For the best taste and quality select USA American Blue Crab - it's the only one that can be labeled "blue crab" meat.

★ USA American Blue Crab is packed in containers as fresh or pasteurized and is available in the following forms:

- Lump: The largest pieces from the body portion adjacent to the backfin. Use in recipes where appearance is important.
- Backfin: White body meat consisting of lump and flakes. Pieces are smaller than lump, but can be substituted for lump meat.
- Special: Flakes of white body meat other than lump. Good in crab cakes, soups, casseroles and dips.
- Claw: Meat from the claws that is more brownish in color. Good in soups, crab balls and dips.

★ Pasteurized USA American Blue Crab is sold in hermetically sealed cans; with no preservatives or additives. The one exception is machine-picked claw meat which uses a salt solution to separate the meat from the shell. Pasteurized USA American Blue Crab will last up to six months when properly stored unopened in the coldest part of your refrigerator (usually the lowest shelf at the back or in the meat keeper) at 32°F. Once opened, use within three days. Pasteurized crabmeat can be purchased year round.

★ Fresh USA American Blue Crab is sold in plastic containers. It should be stored on ice or in the coldest part of your refrigerator and used within seven to ten days.

★ Freezing of USA American Blue Crab is not recommended as the delicate flavor is lost easily when the product is frozen.

★ Try adding USA American Blue Crab to salads. It is best in salads that allow the delicate flavor of the meat to come through. Mix blue crab with celery, slivered almonds, green onions, fresh pineapple and mayonnaise (or half mayonnaise and half sour cream) for a delightful main dish luncheon salad.

★ Add to gumbos and soups at the end, and continue cooking only until heated through.

★ USA American Blue Crab is also good in pasta dishes.

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It's All About Taste...



BLUE CRAB





MARYLAND BLUE CRAB

This Chesapeake Bay crustacean is probably the most enduring symbol of Maryland. Mature blue crabs average five to seven inches across. They are most plentiful late spring through late fall, although crab meat is available fresh, in season or pasteurized year round.

“Beautiful Swimmers”

The scientific name for the blue crab is *Callinectes sapides*. *Callinectes* is derived from Latin and Greek. “*Calli*” translates to “beautiful” and “*nectes*” translates to “swimmer”. The species name, “*sapides*”, translates to “savory”. Thus the scientific name for the blue crab translates to *savory beautiful swimmer*. Anyone who is familiar with the blue crab will agree that this is an appropriate name.

LEARN THE DIFFERENCE

The Word on Maryland Crab Meat—

IT'S THE BEST!

Maryland produces the finest crab meat available. It is made from the famous blue crab, the “savory beautiful swimmer,” *Callinectes sapidus*, and has a rich, sweet succulent flavor. The body meat is delicate and firm and the claw meat is nutty.

Authentic American Blue Crab is found in Coastal Atlantic and Gulf Coast waters but is in greatest numbers from Maryland through Texas. Crab meat from foreign countries (other than Mexico and South America) comes from blue swimming crab, a different species of crab, *Portunus pelagicus*. Blue swimming crab is imported from Southeast Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and other Asian countries) and areas from East Africa to Japan as well as Australia. Because of the long distance in shipping to get to the U.S. market, the meat must be pasteurized, and is normally treated with preservatives, usually sodium acid pyrophosphate. This additive makes the crab meat very white.

The imported *blue swimming crab* is frequently packaged as *Maryland Style* in crab products ranging from crab cakes to crab dip and crab meat. It is found all across the country in grocery stores and seafood markets and is packaged by some very recognizable companies.

- CHOOSE THE BEST -

More and more restaurants also use Asian crab meat instead of domestic blue crab meat. The average consumer in most cases has no idea that the import is being substituted in recipes that traditionally has contained only **American Blue Crab Meat**.



How can you tell where your crab meat comes from? By law, the crab meat container must list the country of origin if not from the United States. All crab meat produced in the U.S. has a code from the crab meat plant. That code begins with the initials of the state in which it was produced. All Maryland crab meat will have a code beginning with MD. Look for the MD number on the package in the market or ask your waiter for the origin of the crab meat used in any dish available on the menu. You may contact the Seafood Marketing Program for a list of Maryland crab meat processors at 410 841-5820 or e-mail: eberlyNL@mda.state.md.us.

Strict Maryland Health Department and FDA regulations assure the consumer of a safe and wholesome product. In Maryland, crab meat must be steamed rather than boiled. This results in better tasting crab meat that has a longer shelf life and contains less water weight thus giving the consumer more crab per pound. *Check crab meat labels very carefully for the origin of the crab meat.*

DEMAND DOMESTIC CRAB MEAT