



Asian carp in Illinois – Fact sheet

A healthy, delicious, locally-sourced dining option for restaurant patrons

The State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is ramping up the availability of Asian carp for the culinary industry and other users. While some may have a negative impression of the fish due to its name, the truth is that Asian carp is an **appetizing, healthy choice** for dining patrons.

From a sustainability standpoint, Asian carp was recently recommended for consumption by the highly respected www.SeafoodWatch.org program. Developed by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, **Seafood Watch** assists both consumers and businesses in making healthy choices for the environment. **More Asian carp facts:**

- Nutritionally, Asian carp have **high levels of healthy Omega-3 fatty acids** and iron, and are a **high-quality protein source** surpassed only by wild-caught salmon.
- Several public tasting events have indicated that American consumers are typically impressed by Asian carp's **pleasant, mild flavor**.
- Asian carp are **eaten all over the world** and even farm-raised in Asia.
- An abundant supply of **fresh** Asian carp is readily available in **clean** Illinois waters.
- Asian carp is **locally-sourced**, reducing transportation and associated environmental costs.
- As a top-water filter feeder (not a bottom feeder), Asian carp have **low contaminant levels**.
- The harvesting of Asian carp is an **ecologically sound strategy** for reducing their over-abundance in Illinois waterways, which resonates with many dining patrons and restaurateurs.



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As a locally caught, fresh, and sustainable fish, Asian carp has the potential to **increase the financial bottom line** of businesses, and cut purchasing costs **in half** when used as a meat substitute. The fish meat is tender and mild, healthful with beneficial fatty acids, and compares favorably with other popular fish in terms of purity and low levels of contaminants.

Additionally, the consumption of Asian carp will return a healthy balance to local waterways, benefitting both Illinois' aquatic life and its recreational users.

For more information on Asian carp, please contact Ted Penesis, INDR Director of Outreach, at **847-608-3108** or Ted.Penesis@illinois.gov.

See reverse side for Asian carp recipes

Asian carp in Illinois – Recipes

Through a public/private partnership, IDNR is currently making available a FRESH, minced product for purchase and/or sampling



Some notes about the available fresh, minced Asian carp:

- The fish will be **on ice** from harvesting to its eventual processing, when it will then be refrigerated. If you purchased the fish, it will be delivered **fresh**.
- Asian carp will remain fresh for at least 7 days; therefore, based upon the delivery schedule, whatever is **not** cooked within a few days should be **frozen**.
- Once thawed, the moisture content of the product will be higher, but can still be easily formed into patties or however you wish to prepare.
- If necessary, you can freeze again, but like any frozen product, it will degrade somewhat during each freeze-thaw cycle (which is why fish is delivered fresh).

Ideas for preparing Asian carp:

- The minced product you will receive is **very versatile**, so experiment to your heart's desire (ie, for creation of fish patties, egg rolls, tacos, chili, fish cakes, etc).
- As Asian carp's flavor is very mild – ie, **no "fishy" taste or smell** – it will absorb the taste of any ingredients you use in your recipe; consider Asian carp as a **less expensive** and more **environmentally-friendly** substitute for meat.
- For more Asian carp recipe ideas, please click on the links below (note: not all the below recipes use a minced product):
 - https://iiseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Asian-Carp-Cuisine_PrintQuality.pdf
 - <https://www.outdoorhub.com/how-to/2015/01/09/eat-invasive-7-simple-asian-carp-recipes>
 - <http://www.cantbeatemeatem.us/asiancarp.html>
 - <https://www.globosurfer.com/carp-recipes>
 - Also, please email/call the contact at the bottom of this page if you would like to try some delicious Chinese recipes (Asian carp is a delicacy in China).



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More Asian carp facts can be found on reverse side