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## Prawns and oysters

Culinary and fisheries term for exoskeleton-bearing aquatic invertebrates Raw oysters opened and presented on a plate A shrimp cocktail Shellfish is a colloquial and fisheries term for exoskeleton-bearing aquatic invertebrates used as food, including various species of molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms. Although most kinds of shellfish are harvested from saltwater environments, some are found in freshwater. In addition, a few species of land crabs are eaten, for example Cardisoma guanhumi in the Caribbean. Shellfish are among the most common food allergens.[1] Despite the name, shellfish are not fish. Most shellfish are low on the food chain and eat a diet composed primarily of phytoplankton and zooplankton.[2] Many varieties of shellfish, and crustaceans in particular, are actually closely related to insects and arachnids; crustaceans make up one of the main subphyla of the phylum Arthropoda. Molluscs include cephalopods (squids, octopuses, cuttlefish) and bivalves (clams, oysters), as well as gastropods (aquatic species such as whelks and winkles; land species such as snails and slugs). Molluscs used as a food source by humans include many species of clams, mussels, oysters, winkles, and scallops. Some crustaceans that are commonly eaten are shrimp, lobsters, crayfish, and crabs.[3] Echinoderms are not as frequently harvested for food as molluscs and crustaceans; however, sea urchin roe is quite popular in many parts of the world, where the live delicacy is harder to transport.[4][5] Terminology Cooked musselsThe term "shellfish" is used both broadly and specifically. In common parlance, as in "having shellfish for dinner", it can refer to anything from clams and oysters to lobster and shrimp. For regulatory purposes it is often narrowly defined as filter-feeding molluscs such as clams, mussels, and oyster to the exclusion of crustaceans and all else.[6] Although the term is primarily applied to marine species, edible freshwater invertebrates such as crayfish and river mussels are also sometimes grouped under the umbrella term "shellfish". Although their shells may differ, all shellfish are invertebrates. As non-mammalian animals that spend their entire lives in water they are "fish" in an informal sense; however, the term "finfish" is sometimes used to distinguish fish, animals defined by having vertebrae, from shellfish in modern terminology. The word "shellfish" is both singular and plural; the rarely used "shellfishes" is sometimes employed to distinguish among various types of shellfish.[7] Shellfish in various cuisines Archaeological finds have shown that humans have been making use of shellfish as a food item for hundreds of thousands of years. In the present, shellfish dishes are a feature of almost all the cuisines of the world, providing an important source of protein in many cuisines around the world, especially in the countries with coastal areas. Sakura ebi ('cherry shrimp') In Japan In the Japanese cuisine, chefs often use shellfish and their roe in different dishes. Sushi (vinegared rice, topped with other ingredients, including shellfish, fish, meat and vegetables) features both raw and cooked shellfish. Sashimi primarily consists of very fresh raw seafood, sliced into thin pieces. Both sushi and sashimi are served with soy sauce and wasabi paste (a Japanese horseradish root, a spice with extremely strong, hot flavor), thinly sliced pickled ginger root, and a simple garnish such as shiso (a kitchen herb, member of the mint family) or finely shredded daikon radish, or both. In the United States Boiled Maine lobster Lobster in particular is a great delicacy in the United States, where families in the Northeast region make them into the centerpiece of a clam bake, usually for special occasions. Lobsters are eaten on much of the East Coast; the American lobster ranges from Newfoundlad down to about the Carolinas, but is most often associated with Maine. A typical meal involves boiling the lobster with some slight seasoning and then serving it with drawn butter, baked potato, and corn on the cob. Clamming is done both commercially and recreationally along the Northeast coastline of the US. Various type of clams are incorporated into the cuisine of New England. The soft-shelled clam is eaten either fried or steamed (and then called "steamers"). Many types of clams can be used for clam chowder, but the quahog, a hard shelled clam also known as a chowder clam, is often used because the long cooking time softens its tougher meat. The Chesapeake Bay and Maryland region has generally been associated more with crabs, but in recent years the area has been trying to reduce its catch of blue crabs, as wild populations have been depleted. This has not, however, stemmed the demand: Maryland-style crabcakes are still a well known treat in crabhouses all over the bay, though the catch now comes from points farther south.[citation needed] Scallop sandwich served in San Diego In the Southeast, and particularly the gulf states, shrimping is an important industry. Copious amounts of shrimp are harvested each year in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean to satisfy a national demand for shrimp. Locally, prawns and shrimp are often deep fried; in the Cajun and Creole kitchens of Louisiana, shrimp and prawns are a common addition to traditional recipes like jambalaya and certain stews. Crawfish are a well known and much eaten delicacy there, often boiled in huge pots and heavily spiced.[citation needed] In many major cities with active fishing ports, raw oyster bars are also a feature of shellfish consumption. When served freshly shucked (opened) and iced, one may find a liquid inside the shell, called the liquor. Some believe that oysters have the properties of an aphrodisiac.[8] Inter-tidal herbivorous shellfish such as mussels and clams can help people reach a healthy balance of omega-3 and omega-6 fats in their diets, instead of the current Western diets.[9] For this reason, the eating of shellfish is often encouraged by dietitians. Around the world Large shrimp or prawns for sale in Italy A dish of cooked freshwater nerites from the Rajang River, Sarawak, Malaysia Some popular dishes using shellfish: Ceviche Ciooppino Clam chowder Curanto Fruits de mer Paella Sashimi and Sushi Shrimp cocktail Lobster bisque Sho-crab soup Religious dietary restrictions Main article: Jewish dietary laws The Torah forbids the consumption of shellfish (i.e. the only permitted seafood is fish with fins and scales), in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.[10] Jews (of all religious traditions) who fully observe the dietary laws thus do not eat shellfish. Neither do Seventh-day Adventists, who follow Jewish dietary law. Islamic schools of thought vary on whether (and which types of) shellfish may be acceptable.[11] Allergy Main article: Shellfish allergy Approximately 1% of the population is estimated to suffer from shellfish allergy.[12] which is more common in teenage and adult life than very early childhood.[13] Toxic content Some shellfish, such as whelk, contain arsenic. A sample of whelk was found to have a total content of arsenic at 15.42 mg/kg of which 1% is inorganic arsenic.[14] Shellfish caught in Alaska can lead to paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP).[15] PSP is caused by toxins released by dinoflagellate, a type of algae, which are extremely poisonous (1000 times more potent than cyanide) and can lead to death by paralyzing the breathing muscles. Due to warming oceans algae blooms have become more widespread,[16] thereby increasing the likelihood of intoxications of various types. 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External links Wikibooks Cookbook has a recipe/module on Shellfish BC Shellfish Growers Association East Coast Shellfish Growers Association Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association Shellfish News Shellfish Gallery Shellfish Guide Freshwater and Marine Image Bank—Shellfish[permanent dead link] at the University of Washington Libraries, Digital Collection Nutrition Facts for Various Shellfish Retrieved from " Home / Fresh Cold Seafood / 3 Fresh Prawns & 3 Oysters with Salad\$17.90 Includes: 3 x Prawns 3 x Oysters Salad Cocktail Sauce Robyn Williams: And while you are looking hesitantly at lunch and breakfast, think once more of those poor prawns. We know that bees are adversely affected by those new pesticides. Could prawns also be at risk? This warning comes from a Dorothy Hill prizewinner at Southern Cross University in Lismore, Dr Kirsten Benkendorff.Kirsten Benkendorff: Pesticides are obviously developed to target specifically insects, but prawns are in the same phylum, Arthropoda, so they have very similar central nervous systems which is where these pesticides actually target. So it's kind of crazy to think that they won't impact commercially important crustaceans like prawns and crabs as well as the insects that they are designed to target.Robyn Williams: And were people nonetheless surprised to find that this was the case?Kirsten Benkendorff: Well, the research actually has hardly been done at all. People have assumed that insecticides, pesticides are used in terrestrial agriculture and don't get into aquatics systems, but the new breed of pesticides, the neonicotinoids are actually water-soluble and studies from right around the world have actually been detecting quite significantly high levels in waters up to 200 µg/L. Even CSIRO, a study in Australia has found in some Queensland rivers over 1 µg/L of these pesticides.Robyn Williams: That sounds enormous.Kirsten Benkendorff: It is when you consider the toxicity of them, so the concentrations that are actually required to cause an effect. So you can detect them around 1 µg/L but they may be effective at 0.2 µg/L, and that's when you do actually get concerned about the impacts that they may have on the organisms.Robyn Williams: What are the levels like in this region?Kirsten Benkendorff: In this particular region of the Northern Rivers I don't think they are as great as they are in some of the rivers higher up in Queensland where they are doing more intensive sugarcane farming. A lot of the rivers haven't been sampled however, so to my knowledge the Clarence River is the only one that has been sampled and it had high levels of some other types of pesticides but not the neonicotinoids specifically. So it probably depends on the type of agriculture. I would be concerned in areas around where there might be turf farms and where there might be blueberries, for example, because it's approved for use in those types of scenarios.Robyn Williams: What did you find when you went to Vietnam?Kirsten Benkendorff: I was very interested in the situation in Vietnam's because there they do actually co-culture prawns or shrimp and rice. They sometimes integrate them and sometimes it's a rotational type system and they are getting really high rates of mortality where sometimes it is actually up to 100% of the prawns are dying and that's probably an interaction of a whole bunch of stressors and the disease that are causing these problems. But there is no doubt that pesticides would actually contribute. So we are finding the models of farming there are potentially increasing the susceptibility of the prawns to the pesticides.Robyn Williams: When the entire crop is wiped out, what do they do, what can they do?Kirsten Benkendorff: Often it results in the small scale of farms becoming unviable, and they are usually taken over by larger-scale industry, and this often results in digging up mangroves and moving to a new area. A huge amount of mangroves are being removed over there, it's quite startling.Robyn Williams: Haven't they learned that one yet?Kirsten Benkendorff: I think there's people who know, but there's also that level of influence coming in from big business in China which are basically just buying out big tracts of land. And they are building these intensive prawn farms. It's just a completely different model. They do use a lot more sterilisation of the system and they can have more control over the water quality. So a lot of those prawns are perhaps not as contaminated but perhaps also not tested to the levels that we would. But the bigger problem is around the Mekong Delta and other areas where they still have these models of rice prawn small-scale farming and it's the livelihoods of people but also the types of prawns that are getting onto the domestic market which are probably containing the contaminants that wouldn't be allowed on the export market. So whatever is rejected from the export market ends up on the local domestic market in Vietnam.Robyn Williams: Who are your scientific colleagues there?Kirsten Benkendorff: I have a number of collaborators in Vietnam. A colleague, Dr Vinh Dang, was actually my PhD student at Flinders University and now is the head of aquaculture at Ha Long University. I have collaborators at Nha Trang University, a very good relationship with those guys, and also at Can Tho University where they have a lot of connections into the Mekong Delta. So they are able to take me into visit a few farmers, some who are actually quite innovative in realising that co-culture with prawns is actually a model for potential organic growth of rice. They can't do it without the prawns because the prawns contribute to the fertiliser essentially that enables the rice to grow without the use of inorganic fertilisers, and they found better growth of their rice, better survivorship, less disease problems, and the prawns did better as well. But they are concerned of course about the run-off from all of the farms surrounding. Unless the whole districts changes, they are still going to get those water quality issues. So yes, there's a real cultural shift that needs I think to move towards an organic model that sustainably integrates prawns with agriculture.Robyn Williams: You've mentioned prawns a lot, what about oysters?Kirsten Benkendorff: Yes, we've been working on prawns and oysters back here in Australia, and the good thing is that the baseline levels of oysters and prawns that we collect, I'm not finding these pesticides. But when we actually expose them in the tanks, we do find that they accumulate, the pesticides, they can accumulate up to the concentrations of around 2 milligrams per kilogram, which would exceed the tolerable level that would be considered for meat. At the moment there's no tolerance levels set for seafood, I guess on the assumption that seafood aren't exposed to them. But clearly they can absorb them, and certainly after flood type events it could be quite an issue. But some of the encouraging things that we found with the oysters is that whilst they accumulate the pesticides very quickly, if you put them into clean water they deplete very quickly as well...Robyn Williams: That's a new word for me, 'depurate'?Kirsten Benkendorff: Yes, depuration is just the removal of the contaminants from the flesh, and that can happen within three days, we can be back to zero detection of these pesticides in the flesh. So it does actually offer a solution for cleaning up for human consumption. But of course that's the impacts on human consumption, what about the impacts on the oysters and the impacts on the prawns themselves? So we have found that it does actually significantly inhibit the feeding rate of the oysters, and we are certainly in the process with the PhD students of looking at a whole bunch more bio-indicators. So we know that it affects some enzymes specifically. We are also interested to see how it impacts their immune system and how it impacts the reproduction and the early life stages are often more vulnerable.Robyn Williams: The source of the pesticide, obviously you've mentioned various farming areas, but does the pesticide come down in predictable ways, in other words if there is run-off there it is, you can identify it, or does it come from various parts of the soil whenever there is a rain, and so what you've got to do is think ahead as to what might happen if you use too much pesticide rather than just assume if you block off the running water you'll be okay.Kirsten Benkendorff: Yes, it's a really interesting question, and modelling is probably complicated by the fact that different pesticides are different chemical structures and they will actually react differently. So some have quite short half-lives and will actually break down quite rapidly in sunlight, for example. Others will actually be absorbed into the sediment and can hang around for years, and certainly some are going to be more water-soluble than others. The neonicotinoid pesticides are not only water-soluble but they do actually seem to have long half-lives.So certainly overuse is definitely a problem, using doses at the right weather conditions, not just before rain is going to be better not only for the farmers who want to retain it where they actually need it, as well as the environment in terms of preventing that run-off. So thinking I think carefully about the right times of the year. And in those areas where there may be integrated agriculture with aquaculture, I think that there very much needs to be considered what pesticides are going to be retained in the sediment where you're actually looking at growing the aquatic organisms as well.Robyn Williams: Well, congratulations on your work. I can see why you won the Dorothy Hill Award a while ago. Finally, is the industry listening to you?Kirsten Benkendorff: I think it's going to be a little bit more time and a lot more evidence accumulated before the industry...I mean, even in Australia with respect to the known effects on bees overseas there's reluctance to actually limit and restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, so I guess we just hope we can keep accumulating more evidence to build up that case, that these products really need some rethinking, because the long-term effects on our food industries can be quite significant.Robyn Williams: Associate Professor Kirsten Benkendorff at Southern Cross University in Lismore, New South Wales.

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