



Frequently Asked Questions

WILD GEORGIA SHRIMP

Darien, Ga.

What are Wild Georgia Shrimp and where can I buy them?

Wild Georgia Shrimp are premium-quality seafood caught by professional shrimpers in coastal Georgia waters and delivered fresh to local docks. Consumers should always ask for Wild Georgia Shrimp at their local grocery store, seafood market and restaurants. Work is underway to label “Wild Georgia Shrimp” so that it is easily identifiable. The Georgia Shrimp Association (GSA) has developed quality standards to certify Wild Georgia Shrimp.

Where are they caught?

Wild-caught American shrimp from Georgia flourish in nutrient-rich marshes and estuaries before migrating to the Atlantic Ocean. They mature at a natural pace, swimming freely in the waters off the state’s coastline. Wild-caught Georgia shrimp are abundant, and are not considered “threatened” or “endangered.”

How are they caught?

Generations of Georgia shrimpers trawl the waters seasonally with cone-shaped nets that yield about five-million pounds of the healthful seafood each year. They use devices called TEDs and BRDs that allow larger fish and marine life such as sea turtles to escape from the nets.

Are Wild Georgia Shrimp available year-round?

The shrimping season runs April through January, and during this time much of the Wild Georgia Shrimp harvest is sold fresh. During the closed season, several freezing processes ensure their availability year-round from certified facilities.

Do Wild Georgia Shrimp come in all sizes? Varieties?

Shrimp are sized and sold by count (number of shrimp per pound) either whole or headless. For example, headless shrimp of 16/20 count means there are 16 to 20 headless shrimp per pound. Counts for headless shrimp typically range from 16/20 (the largest shrimp) to 60/70 (the smallest).

There are four species of wild-caught American shrimp from Georgia, categorized by four colors: white shrimp (*Litopenaeus setiferus*), brown shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus aztecus*), pink shrimp (*Penaeus duorarum*) and royal red shrimp (*Pleoticus robustus* or *Hymenopenaeus robustus*).

Will Wild Georgia Shrimp be labeled as such in seafood markets, grocery stores and restaurants?

Not always. Be sure to ask your grocer, seafood distributor or restaurant manager if they sell Wild Georgia Shrimp. If they don't, request that they replace imported product with naturally caught Wild Georgia Shrimp.

"Country of Origin" labeling laws are scheduled to take effect September 2004 to help consumers distinguish the origin and method of production of seafood.

What are the nutritional benefits of eating Wild Georgia Shrimp?

These low-fat, low-calorie, low-carb shrimp are a protein-rich food containing heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Studies have found that shrimp are an excellent source of vitamins D and B12, as well as selenium, which may assist in cancer protection. They are also a good source of niacin and iron.

A three-ounce serving supplies nearly 18 grams of protein – almost a third of the daily requirement – with only 84 calories and less than one gram of fat and one gram of carbohydrates.

While the cholesterol content is similar to red meat and poultry, 166 milligrams in three ounces, a study at The Rockefeller University found that steamed shrimp do not adversely affect the lipoprotein profile in people with normal cholesterol levels. "In fact," said Dr. Elizabeth De Oliveira e Silva, one study author, "if shrimp are substituted for beef or other high fat foods, we predict even more favorable effects."

How do Wild Georgia Shrimp differ from farm-raised shrimp?

Wild-caught Georgia shrimp grow naturally and are fished in their natural environment. Because there is currently no way for consumers to tell the source of most farmed shrimp on the market, The Monterey Bay Aquarium maintains a general recommendation to avoid farm-raised shrimp from unknown sources.

According to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, "valuable Southeast Asian coastal wetlands, especially mangrove forests, are often destroyed to create commercial shrimp farms. Where shrimp are cultivated intensively, pollutants and disease organisms build up in the muck beneath each pond. After a few years, the pond can no longer support healthy shrimp. The pond is abandoned and the farm must expand to fresh territory. The contaminated muck cannot support regrowth of the mangrove forest, so the ecosystem will not recover for decades, if ever."

Is the taste different?

Wild Georgia Shrimp get their flavor and color from their natural diet of marine organisms, and because they grow in a natural environment and are harvested at the height of the season, the flesh is firm, the color fresh and the taste is sweet.

This unique flavor profile is thought by researchers at Texas A&M University to be due primarily to “the increased abundance of free amino acids, which the animals utilize to counteract the large osmotic gradient that exists in salty offshore waters. Conversely, pond-raised shrimp are most efficiently raised during the rainy season when pond salinities may drop to one-tenth that of open ocean water. They also speculate that the unique flavor of wild shrimp is due in part to their diet of high-protein, natural foods versus the cereal, grain-based feeds required to grow shrimp at high densities in ponds.”

Is the U.S. shrimp industry thriving?

The National Marine Fisheries Service data shows that the U.S. shrimp industry is the most valuable seafood industry nationwide. But thousands of shrimp industry jobs have been lost to shrimp imports and thousands more are threatened if the industry is not supported. Buying Wild Georgia Shrimp helps support an American legacy.

Is the American appetite for shrimp on the rise?

Americans eat more than a billion pounds of shrimp each year, making it the top-selling seafood in the United States, according to the National Fisheries Institute. Consumption has been rising an average of 33 million pounds a year every year since 1980. Easy to prepare, most fans prefer it sautéed, but it also can be grilled, fried, boiled and steamed.

What is the Georgia Shrimp Association?

The Georgia Shrimp Association was formed to proactively address regulatory, environmental, educational, marketing and related issues that impact the shrimp-trawling industry. The group supports research for improving the commercial shrimp fisheries of Georgia and promotes the wise use of marine resources. GSA also contributes to a broader educational effort by teaming with Wild American Shrimp Inc. (WASI), a newly formed non-profit corporation representing the shrimp industry in Georgia and seven other southern states – Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Both groups are committed to ensuring the viability of America’s domestic shrimp industry and raising public awareness about the quality and many nutritional benefits of Wild American* shrimp. GSA urges consumers to ask for Wild Georgia Shrimp that grow naturally and are certified to be quality seafood. For more information, visit www.wildgeorgiashrimp.com.

Who heads the Georgia Shrimp Association?

John Wallace is GSA president, as well as director of the Georgia Shrimp Certification Program. Wallace leads the Georgia Shrimp Association (GSA) charge to educate the state's consumers, grocers and restaurateurs about the quality of Wild Georgia Shrimp. Under his leadership, GSA has developed quality standards to certify Wild Georgia Shrimp.

* Wild American is a certification mark of Wild American Shrimp, Inc.

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**For more information, contact Colleen Philbrick at 912-236-1192 or
e-mail c.philbrick@hausergroup.com.**