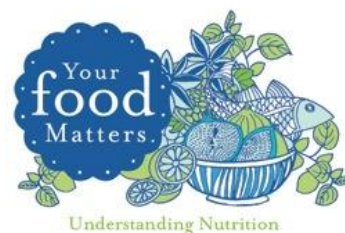


Seafood Seasonality guide – Victoria



Summer

Blue-eye trevalla Available year-round but peak supply in summer. Deep-water species caught off Victoria's coast. A large fish (up to 80 centimetres), it has delicate-flavoured firm flesh and few bones. Suitable for most types of cooking. Occasionally served sashimi style. Widely available.

Snapper A bream, not to be confused with tropical snapper. Available year-round, Con Andronis from Clamms says it's been the best snapper season in years, with huge numbers swimming into Port Phillip Bay. With sweet, mild-flavoured flesh, snapper is a versatile fish because it is available in sizes from 30 centimetres to 60 centimetres. Most of the large snapper are caught wild, while baby snapper is also farmed. Suitable for most types of cooking. Head good in stocks and available whole, filleted or in cutlets. Pin bones easy to remove. Port Phillip snapper recently given tick by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF).

Flathead There are many species of flathead but tiger flathead caught off Lakes Entrance and Portland is widely available. Rock flathead is pricier and can be more difficult to come by. Mild-flavoured firm flesh, which can dry out. More suitable for grilling, steaming or deep-frying. Skinned and boneless fillets or "tails" increasingly available.

Prawns Wild-caught school prawns from Lakes Entrance are plentiful in the summer months.

Southern rocklobster Also called crayfish in Victoria. Caught along southern coast from Apollo Bay to Portland. Best in summer as females waste away over winter when breeding. Flesh is rich-tasting and firm. Excellent boiled, on the barbecue, grilled or steamed but don't overcook or will become dry. Prices vary depending on supply.

***Yellow-eye mullet** Supply can be erratic but caught in Port Phillip Bay particularly in summer months. Quite oily and strong smelling, mullet is suited to baking and grilling although those adverse to strongly flavoured fish may prefer it smoked, or remove the fat layer beneath the skin.

Autumn

***Calamari** Southern calamari, caught at Corner Inlet and in Port Phillip Bay, is a great and sustainable choice for your plate. Available year-round but at its best size in early autumn and into winter.

***Squid** Southern squid is caught in Bass Strait and is a much cheaper alternative to calamari, selling for about \$6/kilogram compared with \$18/kilogram for calamari. A caveat is that squid can toughen if overcooked, while calamari is more forgiving to the novice home cook.

John Dory A very popular fish with sweet-tasting, firm flesh that fetches a premium price. Bycatch of seals by trawl net can be an issue although John Ford says practices are improving. Caught in Bass Strait and the continental shelf in Commonwealth-controlled fisheries, it can be difficult to find in Melbourne markets.

Yellowtail kingfish A type of trevally that looks like a small tuna and is often sold in steak or cutlet form. Mostly line-caught. Historically caught in high numbers in NSW, it is increasingly common in Victorian waters. Smaller fish are more tender and have more flavour. Suited to

baking, grilling or the barbecue but wrapping in foil is recommended. Few bones. Can also be eaten sashimi-style.

***Southern school whiting** Often called silver whiting. An under-the-radar fish caught in abundance off Lakes Entrance and in Western Port. Great in Mediterranean-style dishes. A bit larger than the sardine, it can be filleted, or barbecue or fry the whole fish until the small bones become crunchy and edible.

Garfish Victorian garfish caught in Port Phillip Bay is not considered overfished. This long, thin fish has sweet-tasting firm flesh. Some don't like the many fine rib bones but they are edible, or you can buy it filleted. Whole garfish should have the guts removed. Great grilled or on the barbecue.

Winter

***King George whiting** Available year-round, whiting breed over summer so it is better eating in the cooler months. Whiting has lots of fine bones, which can be off-putting for some. White, flaky flesh suitable for steaming, pan-frying, grilling or baking. Port Phillip and Corner Inlet have the ACF tick.

***Black bream** Caught in the Gippsland Lakes. Whole fish should be gutted as soon as possible. Distinctive, sweet-tasting flesh. Good cooked whole or filleted and is suitable for most methods of cooking. Popular in Asian cooking.

Pink ling Often incorrectly labelled as rockling. Considered by many as unattractive, ling is versatile with long fillets of nice-tasting white flesh often sold as boned fillets or steaks. Overfishing has been a concern; best to buy occasionally.

Silver warehou Also known as spotted warehou or spotted trevally and often labelled simply as trevally. Caught in Bass Strait and some concerns regarding bycatch of seals although Patrick Hone (FRDC) says practices are improving. Stocks are considered to be at a sustainable level. A very cheap, off-the-radar fish with a flavoursome thick, white fillet and few bones. Suitable for most grilling, frying and baking and suitable for fish cakes. Not particularly oily, it is susceptible to overcooking.

Spring

Silver trevally A strong-tasting fish, caught outside the heads or when it enters the bays. Corner Inlet and Port Phillip silver trevally fisheries have ACF approval. Swim in large schools and caught in nets although bycatch not considered a big problem. Can have a strong flavour depending on oil content. Best to remove skin. Suitable for most methods of cooking and bones easily removed.

***Sardine** Widely available from late spring until the end of summer. Plentiful in Port Phillip Bay and in the Eden area. Larger than the canned variety many are familiar with, it is sold whole or filleted. Easy to cook and relatively easy to bone and fillet.

Year-round

***Cuttlefish** Better to eat in the warmer months as adults waste away over winter months when feeding their young.

***Mussel** Available year-round but smaller in winter so makes for better eating in the warmer months. Farmed widely in Victoria but supply can be erratic depending on environmental conditions. Great sustainable choice as it is bottom of the food chain.

***Octopus** A byproduct rather than targeted species often caught in seine nets off Lakes Entrance and at Portland or caught in lobster pots in Victorian waters. Very popular in Mediterranean dishes. You can eat the head but most flesh is in the tentacles.

Abalone Most locally available abalone is farmed. Ocean Wave Seafoods farm near Geelong has received the ACF tick and there are many farms near Mallacoota. Wild abalone mostly go to high-end restaurants or are exported. Saute or fry briefly so as not to toughen. Alternatively, cut abalone flesh into strips, place in a colander and pour over two cups of boiling water.

Yabby Farmed in Victoria but not widely available.

Sea mullet Available year-round although not a big catch for Lakes Entrance fishermen. May be difficult to source because of its low value. Strong flavour.

NOTES: We consulted experts from industry, academia, conservation and government for this guide. Not all agree with the inclusion of each species. The asterisk denotes those recommended by the Australian Marine Conservation Society as "better choice" species. See sustainableseafood.org.au

On sharks: The predominant species landed in Victoria is gummy shark, which is not considered at risk of overfishing. Lack of bones makes gummy popular but the umbrella term "flake" in Victoria makes it difficult to identify the shark on offer. There are significant bycatch issues with some gummy fisheries.

Buying: Some of the listed species may be difficult to source. Call your local fish shop to check.

Source:

<http://www.goodfood.com.au/lifestyle/cuisine/spread-the-net-tip-the-scales-20120206-1r0rm.html>