



Farmed, wild catfish: know nutrition, safety

Our family really enjoys eating catfish. Is there much of a difference nutrition-wise between farm-raised catfish that we find at the store and wild catfish we catch on fishing trips?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Nutrient Database, there are some substantial differences between the two, particularly in fat and calories.

According to the nutrient listings, a 5-ounce fillet (cooked by dry heat) of farm-raised channel catfish has 217 calories and 11.5 grams of total fat. The same size fillet from a wild channel catfish has just 150 calories and just 4 grams of fat.

A small amount of fat in both types of catfish is healthful omega-3; interestingly, although wild channel catfish have less overall fat, they have more omega-3s than their farm-raised cousins. But neither type comes close — in either total fat or healthful fat — to the amounts found in salmon, mackerel, herring or other types of cold-water fish.

Now, if you're talking about fried catfish, the nutrition information changes drastically. A 5-ounce portion of breaded and fried channel catfish has nearly 340 calories and nearly 20 grams of total fat.

However, the fat and calories in your catfish aren't the only things to

consider. Every year, each state issues sport fish consumption advisories, based on contaminants, such as mercury and PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, found in waterways.

In 2010, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has advised that everyone limit sport fish consumption to one meal a week, unless there's a more restrictive advisory for particular species from particular waterways, such as limiting consumption to one meal a month or, simply, "Do not eat." To review the advisories for your favorite fishing hole, see the Ohio EPA's website at <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/fishadvisory/index.aspx>.

Although the safety of imported catfish and other types of seafood remains a concern, U.S. farm-raised catfish doesn't appear to have similar problems. According to the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch recommendations, U.S. farmed channel catfish is a "Best Choice" for consumers. In fact, according to the aquarium, channel catfish is one of the most commonly farmed fish in the nation, and is thought to be among the most sustainable fish species being raised. For more information or to download a "Seafood Watch Pocket Guide," see its website at <http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/>.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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