

TASTE THE ATLANTIC

A SEAFOOD JOURNEY

'Taste the Atlantic – a Seafood Journey' is a dedicated seafood trail on the Wild Atlantic Way brought to you by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) in partnership with Fáilte Ireland. Stretching the length of the Wild Atlantic Way, the trail passes some of Ireland's most breath taking seascapes and landmarks. It's a whole new way to experience the Wild Atlantic Way and to learn more about how Irish seafood is caught and farmed. Dotted among the natural wonders are renowned seafood producers and fishermen.

Restaurants on the trail source their seafood from the producers above so you can truly experience freshly caught and farmed quality Irish seafood from tide to table...

www.wildatlanticway.com



OYSTERS





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Oysters were once a common food all along the coasts of Europe but overfishing in the 1800's resulted in them becoming a little known luxury. Despite this, Ireland is now one of the few European countries where there are still wild, self-sustaining native oyster beds. Oysters were first cultivated in Ireland about 100 years ago. It is only in the last 30 years, the cultivation of oysters has become successful. Two types of oyster are now cultivated in Ireland, the native European oyster (flat oyster), '*Ostrea edulis*' and '*Crassostrea gigas*' the Irish rock oyster. The Irish rock oyster was introduced to Ireland in the late 1970's and is now the main species cultivated on our shores.

TASTE AND NUTRITION

Oysters have exceptional nutritional values. Rich in protein and low in fat, they contain high levels of the five essential minerals – iodine, iron, selenium, copper and zinc. A portion of six oysters provides you with the daily recommended levels of these trace minerals.

Irish rock and native oysters have very different flavours. In fact, oysters from different bays have very distinct flavours. Similar to wine, the location of where the oyster is grown will provide it with its own unique taste. This is what oyster lovers call the '*meroir*'. Discover for yourself the rich and varied flavour of oysters along the 'Taste the Atlantic – a Seafood Journey' route.

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IRISH ROCK OYSTERS
CAN BE EATEN
ALL YEAR ROUND



IT TAKES
OVER 3 YEARS
TO GROW AN IRISH
ROCK OYSTER

A NATIVE OYSTER TAKES 4 YEARS

NATIVE OYSTERS CAN
CHANGE THEIR
SEX FROM YEAR TO
YEAR OR EVEN WITHIN
THE YEAR!



AN OYSTER FILTERS
ABOUT 250 LITRES OF WATER
PER DAY



GROWING TECHNIQUES

Most Irish rock oysters are grown in bags on trestles which are placed on the shore where the farmer can only access them at low tide. These trestles keep the oysters above the seabed and provide the perfect environment for the oysters to feed as the tide brings in the natural nutritious food supply of plankton from the Atlantic Ocean.

Because the sea temperatures around Ireland are too low to allow spawning, these oysters are reared in hatcheries. The young oysters are then placed in trestle bags and allowed to mature.

The role of the farmer in the process is to ensure that the slower and faster growing oysters are sorted by size and grouped in the growing bags together. You may also see the oyster farmer shaking the oyster bag; this is to ensure that the brittle edges of the oyster are removed and that the classic tear drop shape with a deep meat filled shell is achieved.