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Arctic Char: another green option



Arctic char is an up-and-coming alternative to farmed salmon because the texture and taste is similar. For this reason, we added it to all regional Seafood Watch pocket guide versions as a "Best Choice" back in January.

Dory Ford, executive chef at Monterey Bay Aquarium's Portola café and restaurant uses Arctic char on his seasonally changing

menu to replace wild salmon when they're not available. "It's meaty like a large trout with salmon overtones of flavor and texture. You can grill and bake it like a salmon," Dory explains.

"Our waiters know people will like it so they're comfortable recommending it. It takes pressure off farmed salmon. Ever since Seafood Watch highlighted it at [Cooking for Solutions](#) it's become more available year round and the price is consistent," says Dory.

Arctic char are in the salmon family and native to the northern regions of North America and Europe. Though it's available wild-caught, char is typically raised in land-based re-circulating systems which reduce the risk of disease transfer, pollution and fish escapes. Like salmon, Arctic char are carnivores that require feed made from wild fish -- causing a drain on the ocean's natural food web. However, the amount of wild fish needed to produce farmed Arctic char is low compared to other carnivorous farmed fish like salmon and this one issue of concern does not warrant a lower overall Seafood Watch ranking.

This makes Arctic char a great alternative for salmon lovers, especially now that the wild salmon fisheries in California and Oregon are currently closed. Wild Alaska salmon is still available and is a "Best Choice". The Pacific Fishery Management Council will decide in April if these fisheries will remain closed or re-open for the 2009 fishing season.

What you can do:



1. Learn more about wild and farmed salmon on the [Seafood Watch website](#).
2. Order pocket guides and Become Aware cards so you can distribute them at local restaurants where farmed salmon is sold.
3. Order Thank You cards so you can distribute them at local restaurants where wild salmon, Arctic char and other sustainable seafood options are sold.

*Limit three of each card per order. No limit on pocket guide orders. [Order Here](#)

Seafood Watch in Google Ocean version 5.0

With the release of version 5.0, [Google Earth](#) lets you dive into the ocean, explore marine habitats and make ocean-friendly seafood choices. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program and scientists at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute contributed to the Ocean in Google Earth, released February 2, 2009. Explore for yourself! Just download the new version, launch the application and use the side navigation to go to: Layers> Ocean> State of the Ocean, and ensure the box marked "Seafood Watch" is checked.

~ **Serena Federman**
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