



Coast Notes



A Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Service Publication

VIMAS is a cooperative program between

the University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program & the University of the Virgin Islands' Center for Marine and Environmental Studies.

THE FISH AND SEAFOOD YOU BUY: IS IT FRESH?

Get to know the characteristics of fresh fish and seafood.



Whole Fish

- Fresh fish has a light and mild smell, never a strong or offensive odor.
- If the fish is fresh, its flesh will feel firm and flexible. To test its consistency, press the flesh down with your finger. If the spot you pressed stretches and then returns to its original shape, it is fresh. If the spot remains sunken, it is not.
- Eyes should be clear, bright and protruding (sticking out) never milky or sunken.
- Skin should be bright and colorful; never dull or pale.
- Gills, if present, should be pinkish-red and free of mucus or slime.

- Scales, if present, should be firmly attached to the skin.

Steaks or fillets

- Should have a light, mild scent; never a strong or offensive odor.
- The pieces should be clean and firm.



Fresh shrimp

- Should have a mild, fresh odor.
- The flesh should be firm.
- The head, if present, should be attached firmly to the body.
- The body should not be pink. A pink color generally indicates that the shrimp has already been cooked.
- The carapace, or shell, and skin should be free of black spots.



Oysters

- Shells should be tightly closed at the time of purchase.
- The flesh should be a creamy color and all liquids should be clear.
- The odor, if any, should be mild and agreeable.

Other seafood

- Fresh seafood should always have a mild, agreeable smell.
- Test the firmness of the flesh as previously described.
- Fresh flesh should never be discolored.

Live lobster

- Should be active.
- When cooked, the lobster tail should curl under the body and the flesh should be firm, not mushy.

Other Seafood that is purchased live

- Make sure the animal is moving. (Make sure it really is alive!)

