



Fish & Seafood

Fish and seafood offer a significant opportunity for chefs and hospitality businesses to appeal to customers. At a time when cash-strapped consumers are concerned about their own spending power, as well as the wider economy, fish dishes offer a touch of that all-important 'wow' factor, with ideas and flavours that consumers are less likely to cook for themselves at home.

Fish and seafood is also often seen as a healthier menu choice when eating out, an area consumers are increasingly conscious of, especially with calorie labelling now being widely included on menus.



Chef support

- Direct Seafoods works closely with chefs and hospitality operators from right across the sector. Our broad customer base within foodservice makes a significant positive contribution to the range and choice of sustainable seafood available to customers. We produce many bespoke cuts, fillets and added value products, to help give menus a point of difference.
- An industry-leading skills training programme helps ensure that our fishmongers are confident to work with the full range of fresh fish and seafood species processed through our regional depots.
- We promote the use of the broadest range of sustainable species, maximising yield, significantly reducing waste and working closely with customers, providing practical support and advice to enable foodservice businesses to serve as diverse a range of fish and seafood as possible.

Top Products

The best-selling fish & seafood products 2022

- Haddock
- Mussels
- Salmon
- King Prawns
- Smoked Salmon
- Hake
- Squid
- ChalkStream® Trout
- Frozen Battered Cod
- Cod

- The overall top fish and seafood lines sold by Direct Seafoods reflects the increasing diversity of the market. Alongside established favourites such as cod, haddock, salmon and prawns, chefs are increasingly using alternative white fish species such as hake and pollock.
- Products such as squid, mussels and sea bass have increasingly become 'regulars' on restaurant, casual dining and gastropub menus, driven both by their popularity with chefs, and strong appeal to consumers.
- The best sellers feature a range of fillets, which chefs increasingly serve in a variety of ways. As well as battering white fillets in the kitchen to add a bespoke feel to fish and chips, fillets can be simply shallow fried or grilled, and served with home-made sauces and fresh, seasonal vegetables to create appealing, healthier dishes for menus and 'catch of the day' specials boards.
- Mussels, prawns, and squid are also versatile ingredients that appear in a wide range of dishes across the hospitality sector.
- Salt and pepper squid is a popular starter, while moules-frites can double up as a starter or main according to portion size. King prawns, supplied frozen and ready to sizzle on the grill, make an impressive addition to a steak in a surf and turf dish, or served spiced with noodles or rice in Asian-influenced dishes.

Fastest growing products

The fastest growing fish & seafood product lines in 2022

- Mussels
- Haddock
- ChalkStream® Trout
- Pollock
- MSC Cod
- Smoked Salmon
- Battered Cod



- The increasing diversity of fish and seafood on menus is seen in the growth of frozen pollock fillets as a white fish alternative, while sustainably farmed ChalkStream® Trout is a wonderful alternative to salmon, used by chefs both smoked and fresh, in a variety of dishes.
- The growth of premium MSC certified cod products reflects the willingness of chefs in all sectors of the market, including high-end restaurants, to embrace sustainability concerns.
- In a tight labour market, operators are finding using pre-prepared products such as battered cod, saves both time and costs.



● Gin cured ChalkStream® trout, celeriac slaw, pickled candy beets and fresh herbs

Top selling fish products

Haddock | Salmon | Hake | ChalkStream® Trout | Cod

- Despite a number of concerns about farmed salmon, demand remains strong. Direct Seafoods sources salmon with a range of origins, including Loch Duart RSPCAA accredited whole salmon, which meets chefs' demands for a premium product with the reassurance of proper accreditation to maintain welfare standards.

Top selling seafood products

Mussels | Scallops | Prawns | Clams | Squid

- The versatility of shellfish such as mussels and scallops, puts them in strong demand from chefs, this is reflected in the range of ways in which scallops, as one example, are supplied. Chefs can order whole scallops on the shell, with roe on, roeless and in a range of pack sizes and formats, allowing scallops to be served in a broad range of dishes and at different price points.

Top selling added value fish & seafood products

**Battered Cod | Fish Cakes | Salt & Pepper Squid
Battered Pollock | Battered Goujons | Breaded Cod
Battered Haddock | Breaded Fish Fingers**

- With hospitality operators in all sectors dealing with the ongoing labour shortage, added value products are increasingly in demand. Battered fillets can improve portion control and help reduce food waste. Fish cakes and salt and pepper squid are versatile options as starters, mains and in sharing platters. Fish cakes and goujons also allow use of offcuts, reducing food waste and supporting sustainability initiatives.

- With an increasing focus on nutrition, breaded goujons and fish fingers allow education caterers and those providing children's menus, to cost-effectively offer fish as a healthy option on menus.

Top Five Growth Predictions

- King Prawns.** These have been one of the more stable seafood lines over the last couple of years. Whilst not totally immune from inflation and higher processing costs, they have not been subject to increases of the severity seen on some other lines. King Prawns remain hugely popular, and are incredibly versatile. Chefs can serve them whole and grilled, in a variety of Mediterranean dishes, in fish pies, in surf and turf combos, skewered, curried or tempura battered. This means prawns can feature in a range of dishes on any menu and are a low labour option.

Prawns are supplied frozen, ensuring zero wastage and long shelf life. The increasing levels of sustainability accreditation on farmed prawns helps to make them a responsible choice. At a time when budgets are tight, prawns offer chefs menu versatility, and are always popular with customers.

- Fish & chips.** Although the whole sector faces challenges, managed pubs have been reasonably robust in recent

years, and Direct Seafoods works with a number of pub operators to provide fish fillets for fish & chips, prepared to the customer's requirements. People may think twice about fine dining, but a trip to the pub for a fish & chip lunch remains popular. This has been demonstrated in strong cod and haddock sales to pubs in 2022, which looks set to continue in 2023.

- Mussels:** Mussels are one of the most sustainable seafood lines hospitality operators can buy, and are cultivated all around the UK, meeting provenance expectations. Mussels are also good value, and so a great option for cash-strapped consumers looking for something they wouldn't cook at home. They are also incredibly versatile, either presented in a starring role in Moules-Frites, as part of a seafood linguine, or even as a garnish for other fish specials.

- Salmon:** Salmon is perennially popular, although Direct Seafoods has also had success converting some customers to alternatives such as locally sourced ChalkStream® trout. As more salmon farms work towards Aquaculture Stewardship Council accreditation, concerns relating to pollution, social responsibility, sustainability of fish feed, biodiversity and diseases are being addressed. This will both maintain and grow the popularity of salmon.

- Fish pies and fish cakes:** These are menu staples in hospitality and catering businesses throughout the UK. The ability to create popular dishes in the kitchen using cheaper offcuts from portioned fish enables chefs to offer an economically sound choice, whilst utilising the principles of head-to-tail eating and minimal food wastage. Direct Seafoods also works with a UK specialist, producing bespoke fish cakes to customer specification. This is a way to reduce labour costs in the kitchen, whilst retaining quality, and using a unique recipe to create a point of difference on the menu.

***Direct Seafoods prepares and supplies a number of products, including haddock fillets, to the bespoke requirements of a range of hospitality operators. Figures in some tables include combined volumes for a range of bespoke products as well as general sales.**

Direct Seafoods offers one of the largest ranges of MSC certified seafood of any foodservice supplier. The business was named MSC UK Fresh Fish Foodservice Supplier of the Year 2022 and FWD Green Wholesaler of the Year 2022.



King prawns



Pan fried hake, sorrel butter sauce and grilled asparagus with gremolata



Lightly curried mussels with a garnish of leeks, strips of sweet potato, onions & garlic

Inspiration...

- Gin cured ChalkStream® trout, celeriac slaw, pickled candy beets and fresh herbs
- Pan fried hake, sorrel butter sauce and grilled asparagus with gremolata
- Lightly curried mussels with a garnish of leeks, strips of sweet potato, onions & garlic