



iFish

Europe and Its Fish

The fishing industry is a crucial part of the European identity. It employs hundreds of thousands of people across the continent and it also provides an important source of food for many. Did you know we eat more fish here than anywhere else in the world?

Here are some more facts about our ties to fishing:

How much fish do we eat?

- o In the European Union we eat an average of 23kg of fish each every year, that's 4kg more than anywhere else in the world
- o In Européche countries we actually eat even more, 25.3kg each
- o All told, we Europeans eat 77bn seafood-based meals every year
- o Only 38% of us eat fish at least twice a week
- o Our favourite fish are:
 - Tuna – every EU member will eat 2.14kg each every year
 - Cod – 1.96kg
 - Salmon – 1.72 kg
 - Pollack – 1.64 kg
 - Herring – 1.18kg

- o Just one trip on one of our fleet's larger vessel can provide over 8 million meals
- o And just one fishing company in Europêche provides five and a half million meals a day to West Africa from the catch of its 20 vessels
- o 37% of us say we eat fish because it's healthy, and that cost is the main reason stopping us from eating even more.

What influences the fish we eat?

- o Europêche research found that 47% like to buy local fish. 29% don't mind where it comes from, as long as it is sustainable
- o 18% are only comfortable with fish that is pre-prepared, whether in a sauce or batter
- o Only 15% are confident enough to buy a whole fish and fillet it themselves
- o A staggering 73% of us buy our fish from the supermarket
- o Yet, 54% believe the main supermarkets don't offer a wide enough selection of locally caught fresh fish
- o 41% buy from fishmongers and 16% from fish markets – here the choice is greater and expert advice is on hand, so we can be more daring with the fish we buy
- o 71% of Europeans agree that the fishing industry has an important role in feeding our growing global population

Is fish good for us?

- o All healthy diets should include at least two portions of fish a week, 73% of European adults didn't even know this
- o Oily fish, such as salmon and fresh tuna, is particularly high in long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, which help to keep your heart healthy
- o Most omega-3 experts say we need about 500mg every week, but 96% of us don't know what the recommended amount is
- o 60% of Europeans don't eat the two portions of fish a week recommended to us by experts

How far back does our link with fishing go?

- o Humans started fishing 100,000 years ago, around the same time as hunting
- o By around 5000BC most of the equipment we still use in fishing today had been invented, including lines, hooks and floaters and sinkers to manage nets
- o Fishing as an industry is believed to have developed in Northern Europe in the late Middle Ages, mainly to fish for the Baltic herring that our fishermen still catch today
- o Dutch fishermen introduced 'drift-netting' around the 11th and 12th centuries, they also began regulating catch, processing and shipment so that they quickly built a reputation for quality
- o By the early 1600s Dutch fishermen were exporting over 150,000 tonnes of herring
- o In the period before WWI, with the use of ice on board ships and efficient railway networks, North Atlantic demand for fresh fish grew