



Seafood from Norway: Where quality and sustainability create trust



Norway is a country of wild nature, wild seas and wild fisheries. Our seas are perfectly balanced to produce fish of the highest quality. And Norway works hard to keep it that way.

Long before sustainability became the buzzword it is today, Norway was taking steps to protect its fish stocks, becoming the first country in the world to introduce a quota system for important species such as cod. But fish are migratory, and populations can vary from year-to-year, which is why being a responsible seafood nation is much more than simple quota setting. As home to the largest cod stock in the world, plus many more key fish and shellfish species, we take our responsibility seriously: regulators, industry and science work together to ensure vulnerable areas are protected, seas are clean and fish stocks are sustainable.

Scientists head out on marine research vessels, using sonar and catch research to estimate stock sizes – as well as joining trawlers to study the fish close up. At sea, the Norwegian Coast Guard spends around 70 percent of its resources making sure fishing activities are carried out at the right time, in the right areas and with the right equipment, while on land, the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries carries out regular inspections of fishing vessels arriving in port and at sea.



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The Institute of Marine Research monitors resources but also works with researchers from other countries under the guidance of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to calculate estimates of stocks.

What all this means is that every quota is based on real, in-depth research and, with some 90% of our fisheries involving stocks we share with other nations, set as a result of international negotiations. Norway also knows that for its holistic approach to marine management to be effective, harmful practices that waste resources, impact the health of the seas and make it harder to accurately assess fish stocks must stop.



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A pioneer in sustainability, we introduced a ban on discards in 1987. Norway's fishermen must land what they catch but cannot make a profit on anything outside their quotas. This decision was part of a wider batch of measures including new mesh size rules, seasonal closures, minimum fish sizes and more – all designed to spare juvenile and undersized fish, and minimize unwanted by-catch. And it's success inspired others: in 2011, the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) took an important step when it banned discards in the area of international waters it regulates, while the EU banned the practice in 2019.

Today, Norway continues to innovate in its management of fisheries and aquaculture, making sure resources are always harvested in the most sustainable way possible. While stocks are managed on the back of the best high-tech, scientific advice, our research bodies also monitor for climate change, they advise on regulation and conduct research into the value of seafood as part of the human diet.

Norway has gone from free fishing to strict regulation. Through dialogue and trust, we have learned from the past and set the standard on sustainable ocean management. Today, the Barents Sea cod which migrates into Norwegian waters every year is considered one of the best-managed cod stocks in the world. All proof of what you can achieve when you focus on the future health of your seas.

Our fish – swimming, feeding, spawning in our cold, clear and nutrient-rich waters – are some of the most sustainable in the world and of the highest quality. Today you can't have one without the other. But our focus is also on preserving this important, historic resource for the next generation. Fish is our heritage and our future too, which is why Norwegian seafood is all about trust: Trust in quality and trust in sustainability.

