

fresh is not a brand

NOVA Fisheries is a major, international seafood supplier helping to meet the unquenchable demand for fresh seafood. Kind of amazing since NOVA does not sell fresh.

Have you seen the movie or read the book: *The Perfect Storm*? That boat was “trip” fishing. Trip fishing means 10 to 30 days of fishing at sea before returning to port with “fresh” fish. After 10 to 30 days at sea does that sound like fresh fish to you? The fact is that most all of the fish, most all of it, caught in the ocean, is caught this “trip” way. “Day” boats are a thing of the past. And if you are not in the city where that boat comes to port, well, add more days to the age of the catch. Of course some fresh comes from fish farms. But the majority of farmed fish, other than trout and catfish, is farmed in foreign countries, nowhere near the U.S. dinner plate.

Fresh has become an icon, a brand, especially in the United States. It has come to symbolize some “Seal of Approval” for quality and Americans pay for it. In fact, Americans pay, a big, big premium to buy fish that is labeled “fresh”. But, pretty much, only Americans pay this premium to buy seafood. Why? Because from Singapore to Japan, on the Asian side, through to England, France and Germany on the European side - - the vast majority buy seafood frozen or live. Live because, well, it is certainly fresh! And frozen because it is (1) dependable in supply (2) distinctly better, consistently fresher, in flavor and (3) advantageously priced, no premium required to its counterpart, fresh.

In our beautiful corner of the world, if consumers do not see or hear the word “fresh” they question the goods. They question the establishment! The illusion that fresh is better is one of the great sales hypes of modern times. And sadly, too many really believe it. There is so much demand for fresh in the United States that “trip” boats stay out longer to deliver more fresh. What an oxymoron!

A popular source of fresh, to fill America's love affair for the brand, comes from frozen. The crazy fact is that, especially when using Frozen At Sea fish and shellfish, frozen provides a measurably better quality dining experience than fresh. Frozen is also popular because it provides a markedly better margin of profit, costing on average 10 – 40% less than the price of fresh. There is so much frozen used to fill the demand for fresh that there is a well-known expression for the practice: “refreshing.”

Technically speaking, frozen seafood simply has less age. And Frozen At Sea is the freshest insofar as being ageless because of the ever-advancing technology of deep freezing. All said, Frozen At Sea means frozen the day it is caught, usually within 4 hours of catch, and held almost cryogenically at minus 20 to minus 60 Centigrade (-20 to -60 C). In more academic terms: there is no decay once fish is frozen super cold. Hence, the faster you stop the process of aging the fresher, the better, the truer in flavor the food.

This brings us then to an honest, more factual, definition of fresh:

.... food which has an acceptable state of decay and decomposition.

So if you think that the catch from a “trip” boat, which has been at sea 10 to 30 days is fresh, you may want to do a blind taste test.

As we began, NOVA Fisheries is a major, international seafood supplier helping to meet the unquenchable demand for fresh seafood. Kind of amazing since NOVA does not sell fresh. NOVA Fisheries produces only frozen, especially Frozen At Sea, for companies who sell fresh seafood. Since 1985 NOVA has supplied thousands of restaurants, caterers and distributors in the United States and around the world (18 countries at last count).

Many of the NOVA customers report that where they sell some fresh seafood, fresh trout, farmed salmon or catfish, it is the NOVA Scallops, the NOVA King Crab, the NOVA Shrimp, the NOVA fillets of Halibut, Tuna, Cod etc., landing the best reviews. And, Frozen At Sea fish and shellfish from NOVA can be on hand every night without concern for whether a 10 to 30 day trip boat did or did not come into port that day.

Bottom line is the kicker. Frozen At Sea from NOVA ends difficult menu planning by eliminating the guesswork as to the cost of goods. Prices do not rise on a whim (due to poor catch, weather or whatever). Customers report that on average, over a menu cycle, prices from NOVA are 10 – 40% below fresh. For these reasons, fish and shellfish from NOVA provide a sizable boost to the bottom line.

Fresh is not a brand. NOVA is a brand, meeting the needs of those who want the freshest seafood available.