



We are seafood spoiled in Louisiana. With the beginning of Lent we accept our religious sacrifice with shameful excitement as we are “forced” to eat fish and seafood on Fridays. Lent ends but our seafood season is just warming up. Too often healthy eaters fall into a rut with lean protein. The ‘go-to’ lean protein source is usually a chicken breast, but that can get boring. Low in fat and calories, but just as rich in protein, the seafood caught locally fits perfectly into a healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition Facts

Cholesterol

Seafood has gotten a bad reputation since it is high in cholesterol. However, research has shown us that our cholesterol levels are most affected by the saturated and trans-saturated fats in our diet. Seafood is low in saturated fat; therefore, having less impact on your cholesterol levels than other protein sources.

Fat

Shrimp, crabs, crawfish, oysters, speckled trout and red fish (common seafood options of Louisiana’s coast) are all “lean meats”. A lean meat is defined as: 1oz = less than 3 grams of fat, about 55 calories and approximately 7g of protein.

Omega -3 fatty acids

These fats must be obtained from foods in our diet. Omega -3s are found in fish, vegetables oils, nuts (especially walnuts), flax seeds/oil and leafy vegetables. These fats are needed for many aspects of a healthy life; from brain development to preventing cardiovascular disease. It is recommended you consume omega 3 rich foods twice per week. In other words, 3-4oz of fish two times per week. However, not all fish are rich in Omega-3s. The lower the total fat, the less omega -3 fatty acids. Good fish sources, which can be caught locally, include flounder and catfish. If you get to fish offshore (or just buy it in the store) tuna, amberjack and snapper are also good sources of omega -3s. Of course there are many ways to consume your omega-3s which may not come from the waters off our coast. Salmon, sardines, and halibut are excellent sources, but so is flax (seed or oil).

Enjoying Eating

New Orleans is known for its flavorful food, but not always for the healthiest cooking. While we all enjoy a good fish fry, that’s not the healthiest way to prepare seafood. Broiled or sautéed (limited butter or oil), boiled, blackened or baked

seafood can be easily prepared without a lot of added fat. Of course you can keep it raw, and enjoy the low fat protein source of oysters too.

The minimal heat needed to cook seafood makes it a good dish to prepare during the summer. Unlike the need to cook a roast for hours in a 350^o oven, you can sauté a piece of fish in minimal oil in minutes. Additionally, the potential to enjoy seafood cold on a salad adds to its versatility as a summer food.

Lastly, yes portion control is still important. Toss a handful of cold boiled shrimp on your salad, but use the remoulade sauce sparingly; top your mixed greens with a blackened piece of red fish, but hold the butter and lemon sauce. Louisiana seafood can be easily enjoyed without being overly indulgent.

Below is a recipe taken from the Louisiana Seafood website, courtesy of Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

AMBERJACK FISH TACOS WITH ZESTY SLAW AND AVOCADO CREAM SAUCE

Cooking/Prep Time: 30 minutes
Serves 8, 2 tacos each

INGREDIENTS



- ZESTY SLAW
 - 1 16oz. bag of coleslaw mix
 - 1 12oz. bag of broccoli slaw mix
 - 2 Tbsp. red onion, minced
 - 2 Tbsp. cilantro, minced
 - 2 – 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
 - 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced (optional)
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - 2 Tbsp. honey
 - 2 tsp. white or apple cider vinegar
- AMBERJACK FILETS AND TORTILLAS
 - 2 lbs. Louisiana amberjack filets, cut into 16 individual pieces
 - 16 6-inch corn or flour tortillas
 - 1 tsp. garlic powder
 - 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
 - 1/2 tsp. chili powder
 - 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika or chipotle powder (optional)
 - 2 – 3 Tbsp. olive oil
 - Juice of 1 lime
- AVOCADO CREAM SAUCE
 - 2 avocados, pitted, peeled, and cubed
 - 1/4 cup light sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
 - 2 – 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
 - Salt, pepper, and all-purpose seasoning (or Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning) to taste

DIRECTIONS

1.) Preheat oven to 350°F. Wrap tortillas in foil. Spray a baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

2.) To prepare slaw, combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix thoroughly. Set aside or refrigerate.

3.) To prepare the fish, combine seasonings in a bowl. Drizzle fish with olive oil and dredge it through the seasoning. Squeeze fresh lime juice over the seasoned fish.

4.) Place fish in the prepared baking dish, uncovered, and bake in the oven along

with the foil-wrapped tortillas for 10 – 12 minutes or until the fish is fully cooked.

5.) While fish is cooking, prepare the avocado cream sauce by stirring all ingredients together in a medium bowl. Set aside.

6.) Serve fish in warmed tortillas with slaw and a scoop of avocado cream sauce. Add garnishes like salsa, pico de gallo, diced tomatoes, lime wedges, black beans or corn as desired.

Nutrition Information:

Per Serving: 2 tacos (355.4g)
419 calories
15.6g Fat
2.6g Sat. Fat
30.2g Protein
41.0g Carbohydrate
9.6g Fiber
6.0g Sugar
387mg Sodium

Monthly challenge:

Teenage Athlete- Find ways to incorporate fish into your weekly diet (NOT fried).

Parents – Explore all of what our seafood industry has to offer to mix up your summer family menu.