

Tilapia: A Sustainable Seafood Choice

The mild taste and budget-friendly cost of tilapia makes it one of the most popular fish on restaurant menus and for home cooks – luckily it's also one of the most sustainable seafood choices.

Tilapia from the US, Canada, Ecuador and Peru has been awarded a “Best Choice” recommendation and tilapia from Taiwan, China, Indonesia and Mexico was awarded a “Good Alternative” by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch.¹ The Environmental Defense Fund Seafood Selector has given tilapia a “Best” or “OK” eco-rating (and no ‘Worst’ ratings).²

Most tilapia available are farmed. This is because tilapia are very well suited for being cultivated and have been thriving this way for generations. Tilapia farming is environmentally friendly because:

Tilapia eat mainly plants – The algae, tiny plants, grain-based feed and small microorganisms which tilapia prefer for food are sustainably and inexpensively grown – compared to the fish meal (which is made from wild fish stocks) that is used to feed larger carnivorous fish.³

Self-contained aquariums are used – Tilapia are raised in aquariums that use economical systems to purify the water and up to 99 percent of the water is recycled. These ‘recirculating aquaculture systems’ often use “biofilters” – microorganisms that feed on nitrogen – to treat wastewater.⁴ In Ecuador, tilapia are raised in fresh water ponds at low density (meaning the fish are not crowded), which reduces disease, the need for chemicals, and water pollution.⁵

Tilapia have efficient digestive systems – Interestingly, tilapia have long digestive systems compared to their smaller body size. Because the system is so long, there is enough time for the fish to extract nutrients from its simple food. Thus, the fish are efficient at turning tiny plants into a source of high quality protein for people to consume.⁶

Tilapia are an economical source of lean protein and can be found in several places in the supermarket:

- **Frozen food aisle:** Frozen fillets of tilapia are sold in large packages that are perfect for a family. They are also available as a small individual fillet – just right for a single serving at a time. These options help cut down on food waste. To prepare, thaw frozen tilapia fillets and make fish tacos, serve in spaghetti sauce with pasta, or broil for a fish sandwich topped with coleslaw.
- **Fresh fish counter:** Fresh tilapia is one of the most budget-friendly options at the fish counter. Like most fish, tilapia takes less than 10 minutes in the oven and for a technique that cooks fish at a slower rate (with less chance to overcook) try cooking in the slow cooker on high for about 20 minutes.
- **Canned food aisle:** Tilapia can even be found in the supermarket canned seafood section. It is available in convenient pre-seasoned individual pouches in flavors such as Santa Fe, Marinara Sauce, Teriyaki Sesame and Yellow Curry. Serve over pasta, rice, vegetables or eat plain for a quick protein-packed snack.



¹“Seafood Search.” Tilapia Recommendations from the Seafood Watch Program. Web 20 Jan. 2016. <http://www.seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations/groups/tilapia>.

²“Tilapia.” Seafood Selector. EDF Seafood Selector, 13 Nov. 2012. Accessed 20 Jan. 2016. <http://seafood.edf.org/tilapia>.

³Micco, Nicci. “Tilapia: The Fish for the Future?” Eating Well. July-Aug. 2007. Accessed 20 Jan. 2016. http://www.eatingwell.com/food_news_origins/green_sustainable/tilapia_the_fish_for_the_future.

⁴Micco, Nicci. “Tilapia: The Fish for the Future?” Eating Well.

⁵“The Truth About Tilapia.” Berkeley Wellness. 1 Apr. 2015. Accessed 20 Jan. 2016. <http://www.berkeleywellness.com/healthy-eating/food-food-safety/article/truth-about-tilapia>.

⁶Micco, Nicci. “Tilapia: The Fish for the Future?” Eating Well.



Marinara Tilapia Camponata

Ingredients:

- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 stalks celery, trimmed, cut in half lengthwise, and sliced into 1/4 inch pieces
- 1/4 cup pitted kalamata or green olives, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons salt-packed capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 4 medium tomatoes, diced into 1/4 inch pieces
- 2 small eggplants, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 8 ounces button mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 3 (3 ounce) Chicken of the Sea® Tilapia in Marinara sauce pouches, broken into bite-size pieces

Directions:

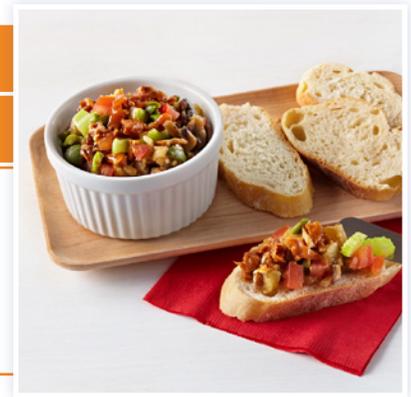
1. Place 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly golden, about 5 minutes. Add celery, olives, capers, and balsamic vinegar and cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for 5 more minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until golden, about 4 minutes more. Add tilapia and cook just until heated through.

TOTAL TIME:
60 MINUTES

SERVINGS:
6

NUTRITION:

Calories 220
Fat 11g
Protein 11g
Carbs 22g
Sodium 760mg
Sugar 11g



Recipe provided by Chicken of the Sea®

3. Transfer to a shallow serving bowl. Add onion mixture and stir to combine.
4. Let stand for 15 minutes. Serve warm or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Yellow Curry Tilapia Roti

Ingredients:

- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup cooked potato
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 (3 ounce) Chicken of the Sea® Tilapia in Yellow Curry sauce pouches, broken into small pieces
- 1 pound prepared whole wheat pizza dough
- All-purpose flour for dusting

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Spray a small skillet with cooking oil spray and place over medium heat. Add eggs and cook, stirring frequently until just cooked through. Remove from heat.
3. Place potato in a medium bowl and mash well with a fork. Add green onions, cilantro, curry powder, salt, turmeric and cayenne, stirring to combine. Stir in eggs and tilapia.
4. To make the roti, cut dough into 16 equal pieces. On a lightly floured work surface, roll pieces to 1/8 inch thick; pierce dough all over with a fork.

TOTAL TIME:
55 MINUTES

SERVINGS:
8 APPETIZERS
(2 roti each)

NUTRITION:

Calories 230
Fat 4g
Protein 13g
Carbs 35g
Sodium 810mg
Sugar 5g



Recipe provided by Chicken of the Sea®

5. Evenly divide potato mixture among each piece of dough. Moisten edges of dough with a little water and fold over to cover filling; pinch edges closed and place on prepared baking sheet.
6. Bake until browned, about 16 minutes. Remove from heat and serve hot or warm.

