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**FEATURED EXPERT:
GILLES VEILLEUX,
SEAFOOD MONGER
GMO SALMON,
FARM RAISED FISH
& HEALTHY CHOICES**

Gilles was born in New Jersey into a French Canadian family and lived in Montreal for a few years. He's fluent in English and French languages. He currently resides with his fiancé and son in Central New Jersey. He's employed as a Seafood Specialty Manager in the supermarket industry where he shares his expertise in the rapidly changing seafood market.

Gilles was an executive chef for ten years and loves food service. He trained under two master chefs and an Olympic culinary chef. He served as the first host chef in the Central Jersey American Culinary Federation. He was named Chef of the Week in the "Daily Journal", featured in "Time & Life" magazine, interviewed on "Wine and Dine News" and featured in a Seafood segment on "Good Morning America". Gilles worked at Cipriani in New York City where he specialized as a saucier. He's brilliant in the creation of soups, sauces, gravies and accompaniments.



Gilles Veilleux, Seafood Monger

What Is Happening With GMO Fish?

GMO's are Genetically Modified Organisms. I brought this up at a recent industry meeting and GMO fish regulations are going to be handled as state by state decisions as to what products will be labelled GMO or GMO free. It's going to be one giant mess before anything becomes solid on labelling requirements. The United

States regulations should be implemented as a nationwide effort, but it seems like it's going to be regulated at the state level. GMO's are already out there in foods like papaya and in a granola product. Companies are starting to label products as GMO free. But, this is the first time that we are going to see GMO animals. GMO salmon consists of salmon mixed with ocean pout. Ocean pout is an eel like fish and it grows bigger and faster than salmon does. It's called Frankenfish because of the way it grows so fast and needs less food than natural fish. There are going to be a lot of issues with GMO fish before we see standard regulations on GMO use in live animal food products. Serious questions arise. For example, will people be allergic to ocean pout, will the salmon taste different or have a different consistency than natural salmon? The good thing about GMO fish is that it grows quicker so there are less environmental concerns. The less time the fish spends growing, the less feces the fish produce and less resources are required from start to finish. So far, I feel there are a lot of bad factors and only a little bit of benefit from GMO fish.

Is GMO Fish Available Now?

From what I read and hear, GMO animals probably won't hit the market for a few years because it is necessary to do studies on their effects on human health. It's possible that somehow and somewhere a distributor will use GMO fish without



GMO RALLY FOR PRODUCT LABELS

Photo by © Arindam Banerjee

disclosure of the truth. We are dealing with money and profit. People can feed the fish less because GMO fish grow so much faster than natural fish. So, someone disreputable may sneak GMO fish in without proper approval. I have a feeling that this is going to be a big deal and open a can of worms in the regulatory areas. People out there can use less food, produce bigger fish and sell more than with traditional methods. The industry is going to need a lot of regulation and oversight to control this new GMO growing method and its distribution channels. The FDA is charged with control and regulation in the industry. I don't believe the FDA will allow GMO fish to be released without proper labelling. Once the FDA controls are in place they will be strict to avoid turmoil in the marketplace.

Are You An Advocate of GMO Fish?

No, you're messing with mother-nature and we should not do that. We are doing well with farm raised fish. Let's not fix something that's not broken.

What Is Your Opinion On Wild Caught vs. Farm Raised Fish?

I've been dealing with seafood for almost thirty-five years and from what I experience, read and hear, especially in a central buying hub at Hunts Point, Bronx, NY (formerly South Street Seaport, NYC), buyers are moving toward farm raised fish. Farm raised fish are consistent. Farm raised fish are well labelled with their country of origin and the process runs like a well-oiled machine, so to speak. In addition, Omega three and six fatty acids are just as abundant in farm raised fish as they are in wild caught fish. Farm raised fish are lower in methylmercury content than wild caught fish. I would go with farm raised. Even if the methylmercury content is only slightly higher in wild caught fish, it's still higher than in farm raised fish. Farm raised fish are fed consistently and are the better of the two choices in the marketplace right now.

Are Farm Raised Fish Exposed to Chemicals, Hormones or Waters Filled With Excessive Feces?

When people get information from documentaries or articles they should always check the county of origin that's being discussed. The country of origin is the most important thing to know. I've spoken to hundreds upon hundreds of people through the years that say they don't like farm raised fish. They mention objections like the use of chemicals or injections with farm raised fish. It's simply not true. The question I ask is what country is the farm raised fish from. Not one person out of many hundreds I spoke with actually knew the county of origin. Each country has their own way of handling and regulating farm raised fish products. The United States deals with only very reputable countries that don't use injections or chemicals. Check for the country of origin and that's how you get your answer.

Which Countries Have The Safest Farm Raised Fish?

Norway has pristine waters. Chile and Canada have strict agriculture regulations. Time magazine had a layout on farm raised products and exactly how they are regulated. The United States deals with ideal farm raised fish from regulated countries.

Do Farm Raised Fish Eat Their Own Feces?

This is not even close to being true. Farm raised fish are grown in pods. Pods are sections of netting and the quantity and size of fish in each pod is regulated to avoid feces contamination.

Where Are Farm Raised Fish Located?

It's done in the oceans, bays and inlets. Fish are netted into pods in the natural waterways. This is how the problem may arise where fish escape the nets and enter the ocean to breed with wild fish.



Cage Salmon Farm in Southern Chile

Is It Cruel To Grow Farm Raised Fish?

Farm raised fisheries are much less cruel than the wild caught process. This topic is discussed at Hunts Point, Bronx, NY (a central buying hub for fish). Wild caught fish get stuck in nets, drown, struggle and suffer. Farm raised fish are killed humanely and quickly. Out of the two choices, farm raised fish are treated much more humanely than wild caught fish. Farm raised fish are grown and harvested under controlled circumstances. Pods are large circles of nets sectioned into four parts. Each part of the pod contains certain size fish. Once the fish reach ideal sizes a crane lifts the pod and delivers it to a factory where the fish are humanely killed and distributed to the marketplace.

Where Do Farm Raised Fish Originate?

Farm raised fish begin with real fish eggs that are grown and hatched from start to finish. When they reach a certain size they are put into pods. The fish are fed and controlled in the pods similar to the way chickens or other animals are raised.

How Can You Maximize Omegas?

Whenever you cook any kind of fish you can maximize omega three and six fatty acid content by cooking it skin side up. Don't take the skin off until it's done cooking.

The omega fatty acids are located between the skin and flesh. By putting the skin up the omegas and vitamins go down thru the fish during the cooking process. Much of the flavor is maintained that way, too. When salmon is properly cooked the skin peels off very easily. If the skin does not peel right off, put it on the heat for a couple of additional minutes and check the skin again. The benefit of any fish, especially salmon, is gained by cooking it with the skin side up to maximize the content of nutrients and omega three and six fatty acids.

What Other Fish Are High In Omega Three, Omega Six and Other Vitamins?

Basically, all fish. Bluefish, although harsh in flavor, is high in vitamins. Other fish high in vitamins are swordfish, salmon, flounder, cod and snapper. How fish is cooked is also key to good health.

How Often Should People Eat Seafood?

Seafood is great. I love chocolate, but I don't eat it every day. Everything is fine in moderation and seafood is no exception. Two servings of seafood a week is recommended for a good diet. Proper preparation is important. Use a lot of herbs and olive oil. Don't always fry fish. If you want the full benefits of fish add various herbs, dill, garlic, olive oil and cook by poaching, baking or grilling. Grill it with a lot of olive oil and garlic and I'm coming over for dinner.

Is Shellfish Healthy?

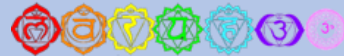
It depends where the shellfish come from. Make your own judgment as to how clean the water is. Shellfish are mud dwellers and a lot of oil settles to the bottom of the water. Mollusks are bivalves and they inhale and exhale whatever is in the water. That's why eating raw clams is like playing Russian roulette. Sellers keep clam tags for ninety days because you can eat a clam today and not get sick until sixty days from now. The clam tags are kept for ninety

days. so that if there's an illness outbreak the harvest site can be located and quarantined. I do not recommended raw shellfish.

How Do You Feel About Sushi?

Sushi should be eaten only from extremely reputable markets. Proper handling of sushi is important from start to finish because the fish temperatures and pH levels of rice must be continually correct to avoid contamination.

Interview with Gilles Veilleux,
Seafood Monger



Shellfish Display



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