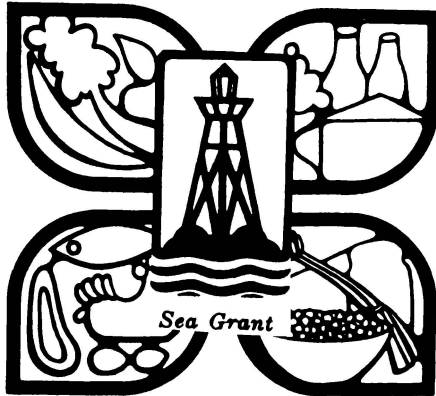


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FOODS AND NUTRITION

MF-522

June 1980

OYSTERS

Available all year long, oysters are truly a Virginia seafood specialty. You may have heard that oysters should not be eaten in months whose names do not contain the letter "R", but this is not true. The truth is that you can buy and enjoy eating good quality oysters year 'round.

HOW TO SELECT GOOD OYSTERS

1. If you buy oysters in the shell, make sure that the shells are tightly closed. If an oyster shell is open, tap it. If the oyster is alive, the shell will close quickly. Do not buy oysters whose shells will not close!

Shell oysters are sold by the dozen, half-peck, peck, and bushel.

2. Shucked oysters should be plump, have a clear liquid, and should smell fresh, not sour. The color of a fresh oyster should be creamy or gray-brown.

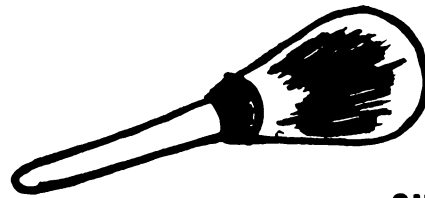
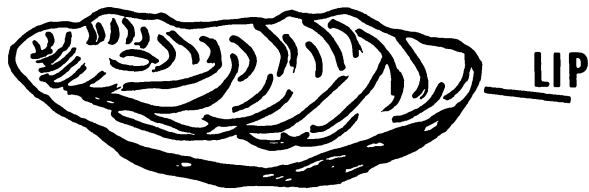
Shucked oysters are usually sold by the pint, quart, half-gallon, and gallon.

WHAT SIZE AND HOW MUCH TO BUY

Oysters come in several sizes. The Standard oyster is the smallest and least expensive. It is the best "all-purpose" size to use in cooking. The larger oysters are more expensive and are generally served when it is important for the oyster to look large and fat as in the half-shell trade.

Small-or-Standard -- 30 to 40 oysters per pint
Medium-or-Select -- 26 to 30 oysters per pint
Large-or-Extra Select -- 21 to 26 oysters per pint
Extra-or-Counts -- 20 or less per pint

To feed 6 people, allow 3 dozen shell oysters or 1 quart of shucked oysters.



**SHUCKING
KNIFE**

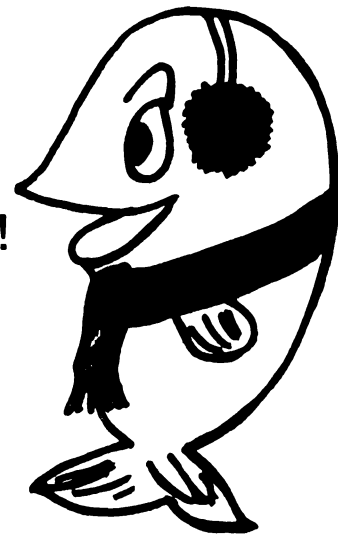
HOW TO "SHUCK" AN OYSTER

1. Hold the oyster so the "lip" or thinner end is facing you.
2. Carefully force the shucking knife through the thin shell (be careful!) until you can push it into the oyster.
3. Slide the knife back and forth to cut the muscle holding the shell together and scrape out the oyster.

HOW TO HANDLE OYSTERS AFTER BUYING

Oysters in the shell will keep 2-3 weeks if kept on ice or in the refrigerator. Shucked oysters will keep for 7-10 days if kept on ice or in the refrigerator.

**KEEP
OYSTERS
COLD!!!**



FREEZING OYSTERS

Shucked oysters can be frozen to preserve them for a longer period of time -- up to 6 months. Spoon the oysters into rigid plastic containers. Strain the liquid to remove bits of shell, and then pour it back over the oysters. Leave $\frac{1}{2}$ inch head-space as food expands when it freezes. Seal the container; label and freeze.