

Study Finds Frozen Shrimp Are Totally Disgusting



Americans eat a lot of shrimp, almost 18 million servings a day that makes it more popular than tuna. And almost all of the shrimp that we consume in the U.S. comes from overseas, sometimes eight thousand plus miles from our dinner plate. Most are raised on farms in countries like India, Indonesia, and Thailand. To maintain large production levels, some of those farms use antibiotics to fight disease. That's a problem because antibiotics I'm not approve by the US for shrimp farming. And it's illegal to import shrimp raised with antibiotics into this country because the antibiotics to hide poor hygiene in ponds where many shrimp are raised. Because over using such drugs may lead to antibiotics resistant bacteria.

That's a public health risk if the antibiotics no longer work to treat human ailments. Consumer Reports tested 342 packages of frozen raw and cooked shrimp purchased in 27 cities across the US and detected antibiotics on 11 samples of imported raw farm shrimp. The samples that tested positively for antibiotics for purchase at large chain supermarkets, natural food stores and big box stores, including Costco, Krogers and Walmart among others. Once more, we also found some bacteria and 60 percent of our raw shrimp samples including vibrio, a common cause of food poisoning in oysters. Consumer Reports says that we should know where our food comes from and how its production impacts your health, the public's food supply and the environment.

So let's follow the journey of an imported farm shrimp to you as shores to see what problems might arise. Troubles can begin before you have any shrimp in it because construction can damage natural coastal areas. Once built, overcrowding with shrimp may trigger other problems. In some cases 150 shrimp may occupy an area of the size of a 60 inch flat screen TV and feed on a diet of commercial pellets, sometimes containing antibiotics. Other chemicals may also be used to ward off disease. These shallow ponds may stretch for acres and if not carefully managed may discharge wastewater which shrimp fecal matter and chemicals into nearby waterways. Shrimp generally travel from ponds to processing facilities where they are headed, shelled, deveined and packaged.

The US Food and Drug Administration requires processors to identify health hazards but tests on imported shrimp by Consumer Reports Safety and Sustainability Center found bacteria on samples, including ones that can cause staff infections and food poisoning. This suggests the

processors may not always practice good hygiene, such as washing hands or wearing gloves. Once more the FDA requires processes to ensure shrimp bound for the United States entrees with unapproved substances including any antibiotics including tetracycline.

But last year the FDA tested less than 1% of imported shrimp shipments, so enforcement is very limited. Retailers and consumers rely on the FDA for inspections. In the 11 instances where Consumer Reports found traces of antibiotics in shrimp the samples were purchased at Albertsons, Costco's, Fry's Marketplace, HY-VEE, Krogers, Sprouts, Farmers Market and Walmart. The residues were found on shrimp imported from Vietnam Thailand and Bangladesh that Consumer Reports began testing in April 2014. Consumer Reports is not alleging that these retailers violated any laws. It is the FDA that is in charge with keeping contaminated shrimp out of the United States.

In most cases Consumer Reports found that both the raw and farmed shrimp purchased from these stores that tested negative antibiotics and these small quantities of antibiotics that it found likely would affect a typical consumer's health. But according to the FDA if in any of these antibiotics had been detected in even 1 shrimp the entire shipment would have been refused entry into the U.S. Consumer Reports wants the FDA step up inspections of US ports and overseas shrimp farms and processing plants. It also would like the agency to increase lab testing on its imported shrimp for antibiotics and bacteria.

Consumer Reports has shared its test results with the FDA and asked them to investigate. The FDA says it has proposed new rules under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act that may help ensure that shrimp important are not adulterated. Consumers should know that many labels that you see on shrimp packaging can be meaningless or misleading. When you see terms like organic unnatural, there are no US standards for these labels when it comes to seafood. The labels that Consumer Reports endorses are *Naturland*, *Whole Foods' Responsibly Farmed* and *Agricultural Stewardship Council (ASC)*.

Wild vs Frozen

In a limited test Consumer Reports purchased 7 different types of raw and frozen shrimp from local Whole Foods stores near the Consumer Reports headquarters in Yonkers New York. 3 wild shrimp from US waters; Atlantic White, Key West Pink and Gulf White shrimp. And 4 were shrimp imported from farms in Thailand, Ecuador and Vietnam. The prices ranged from \$10 a pound for farm shrimp from Ecuador \$19.99 a pound to the wild versions. The size of the shrimp varied. The shrimp were thawed and boiled in Consumer Reports century kitchen and served blind to a trained tasting panel over two days.

They tasted the shrimp for:

- Sweetness
- Saltiness
- Texture
- Ocean/Seawater Taste

Shrimp Identity (meaning that it actually tastes like shrimp)

The results: although the intensity of flavor was more distinct in some wild shrimp, the wild and farm shrimp tasted fairly similar. And whether you choose wild or farm shrimp they pack the same major nutrients.

Consumer Reports suggest that shoppers follow these guidelines when shopping for shrimp.

If you are buying while shrimp go for shrimp responsibly, which you can check out on www.SeafoodWatch.Org Or they recommend Whole Foods or certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) as these are good ways to support brands that avoid overfishing are damaging the environment. If farmed is what's readily available or a better fit for your budget, then look shrimp certified by *Naturland*, *Agricultural Stewardship Council (ASC)* or *Whole Foods' Responsibly Farmed*. These group certify that the stripper raised accordingly to guidelines: protecting environment prohibit the usage of antibiotics. And whether farmed or wild consumers should take the proper steps during preparation to ensure safe consumption. Keep shrimp cold until ready to cook, 40 degrees or below. and work quickly during the shelling and deveining processes and carefully dispose of parts that you don't eat. This helps minimize the spread and growth of potentially harmful bacteria.
