

THE ISLAND OF TUNA



TYPES



Skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*). Fish similar to tuna, but smaller. Elongated, streamlined, rounded body, few scales. Bright bluish-grey colouring on the back, whitish on the belly; belly with 4 or 5 black longitudinal lines. Up to 100 cm in length. Common in the Canary Islands from June to October.



Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus albacares*). Stylised body and significant musculature, both its head and eyes are very small, but its fins are much larger relative to those of other tuna. Blue and grey in colour and its fins have yellowish tones, which give the fish its name. Up to 220 cm in length. Common in the Canary Islands from August to November.



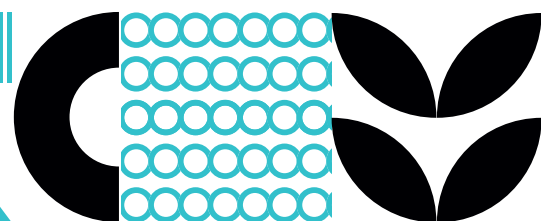
Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*). This is one of the largest tuna species. It has a robust body, plus a large head and eyes. Its first dorsal fin and pectoral fins are a pronounced yellow colour. Up to 250 cm in length. Common in the Canary Islands from June to November.



Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus Thynnus*). Sometimes called cimarrón locally. This is the largest species of tuna. Distinct from other tuna in that its shortest fin is its pectoral fin. It has a small head, eyes, and mouth. The lower jaw protrudes over the upper jaw. Its flesh is pink, sometimes taking on an intense red tone. Up to 310 cm in length. Common in the Canary Islands from January to April (outbound migration) and from October to November (return migration).



White Tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*). Also known as albacore tuna. This is one of the smallest tuna species. Body streamlined, rounded and moderately tall. Large eyes and very long pectoral fins. Dark blue colouration on the back; silvery white flanks and belly. Up to 130 cm in length. Common in the Canary Islands at the beginning and end of the year.





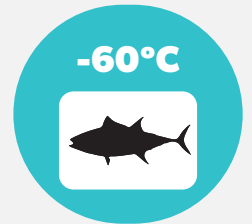
ORIGIN

Origins of tuna fishing The theories about the settlement of the Canary Islands by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans from the ninth century BC are supported by the fishing operations of which there is evidence in the Canary Islands. Catches were processed and exported salted or used to make garum.



Market intensification Tuna fishing in the Canary Islands was abandoned for many centuries and became intense again only around the year 1800 when tuna began to be caught again in abundance. Several canning companies opened in the Islands and they exported their products to the Spanish and Portuguese markets. The canneries were profitable until the 1980s when the increase in production costs and the loss of fishing grounds forced many of them to close. There are currently four large tuna exporting companies in Tenerife that supply fresh tuna for immediate consumption and frozen tuna for canning companies in different parts of Europe.

Tuna today This oily fish continues to swim the coasts of our archipelago at will and although fishing methods are still traditional, preservation processes have advanced. Processors now use deep freezing systems, which manage to reach temperatures of -60°C , where the ice crystallisation is so small that it does not break the cell membranes, keeping water from leeching out and therefore preserving the taste and texture qualities of the meat. This technology increases commercial possibilities for export and local consumption alike.

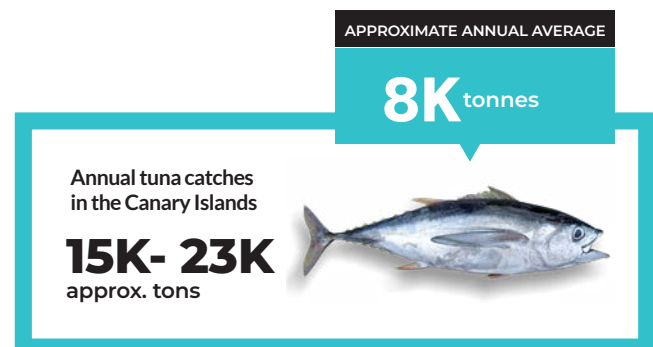


FISHING

Artisanal fishing In the Canary Islands, using purse seine nets to catch tuna is absolutely prohibited. The only legal form of fishing is with a rod and hook for small and medium-sized species, or a line with a hand hook for large specimens. In both cases, live bait is used to attract and capture the different species of tuna, while water jets are used to agitate the water's surface and make it easier to catch fish. This fishing system -one hook for each tuna- guarantees a highly selective fishing technique that, unlike large purse seine nets, does not catch additional species such as sharks, turtles or marine mammals, or fish below minimum catch size. Systems are currently being implemented to improve slaughter and speed up preservation preparations. New techniques involve electric stunners, the Ikejime method and immediate bleeding and cooling.

The fishermen This type of artisanal fishing makes the work of fishermen hard and uncertain. Days can go by without sighting tuna, and then the next day they may discover tonnes. Fishermen sail in search of schools in boats about 16 meters long. Fisherman also have to remain cognisant of the quota system and temporary prohibitions on some overfished species. These systems have led to the recovery of these species and a sustainable use of resources.

Tuna hauls in the Canary Islands are highly variable from year to year. This is due to the different environmental conditions that affect the migrations of the species that visit us. The average production in recent years has been around 8,000 tonnes, but there is a great annual fluctuation, with years with catches of more than 23,000 tonnes and years in which barely 1,500 tonnes are caught.





Artisanal eco-tuna pilot project

Project receiving financial support from the Island Council of Tenerife. Since 2017, the Canary Islands Universities, in coordination with other institutions in Madeira and Cape Verde, have been working on the Macarofood project (<http://macarofood.org>). The main objective of this European project is to highlight the value of the products from Macaronesian artisanal fisheries, training the different actors in the commercial chains and creating lasting alliances between:

- Fishermen’s organisations
- The educational community
- The hospitality industry
- Restaurants
- Local consumers

Among the achievements of this project, we’d like to highlight the addition of local fish products, especially tuna and skipjack loins, to the menus of 12 schools on the island of Tenerife. These schools stopped using frozen fish imported from different parts of the world, and started to consume local fish products. These are much fresher, healthier and available at a price that is sometimes lower than imported fish.

FEATURES AND PROPERTIES

Location

The Canary Islands are a prime location for tuna fishing compared to other places in Spain or the rest of the world. We can say this because local fleets generally don’t have to go far to find huge schools of tuna, depending on the time of year.

Exclusive product

In the Canary Islands, the presence of the five different species on our coasts overlaps throughout the year, which allows supply to the Spanish market to remain consistent practically at all times. In addition, as migrations pass through the Canary Islands before reaching mainland territory, tuna can be offered as an exclusive product out of season in the rest of Spain.

Oily fish such as tuna make up a group of fish species that swim conti-

nuously in the sea. This mobility makes their body fats different from those of other species that do not move as much. In the case of oily fish, the accumulated fat is rich in Omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. This acid, which can only be obtained by including it in the diet, helps regulate cholesterol in our blood and, therefore, improves cardiovascular health.

The most notable vitamins are A and D, which are found in the fattiest areas such as the liver or muscles of these fish. It also contains a high percentage of proteins and has minerals such as iodine, magnesium, iron, phosphorus and calcium that support bone health and blood circulation.

NUTRITIONAL VALUES

	<i>Skipjack Katsuwonus Pelamis</i>	<i>Bigeye Thunnus Obesus</i>	<i>Longfin Thunnus Alalunga</i>	<i>Yellowfin Thunnus Albacares</i>	<i>Bluefin Thunnus Thynnus</i>
Kilocalories	132	200	103	109	226
Total fat	0,97 g	2,02 g	1,01 g	3,74 g	15 g
Proteins	23,58 g	22,90 g	22,00 g	22,23 g	23,30 g

BENEFITS



Consuming oily fish helps prevent cardiovascular disease and reduces bad cholesterol.



Contributes to a healthy bone structure and other physiological processes thanks to tuna’s nutritional properties and its vitamins A, E and D.



Helps prevent cancer with its vitamin D levels.

THE BIGEYE: THE KING OF TUNA

Among the numerous species that are found in our waters, the bigeye tuna stands out as a spectacular ingredient in any kitchen. An excellent source of protein, vitamins and Omega 3, our *Thunnus thynnus* is prized worldwide for its firm flesh and a high presence of evenly distributed fat, which gives it its characteristic flavour and texture.

Tuna has been caught in an artisanal way by our fleet since the 19th century. Canarian fishermen were pioneers in catching large specimens with hooks one by one in a completely sustainable, craftsman-like way. Tuna are found in waters very close to our Atlantic coast, which allows us to consume it fresh. We are also the first in Europe to export it deep-frozen, preserving all its characteristics and flavour.

Did you know?

- The Canary Islands have an annual quota of 537.69 tonnes of bigeye tuna (7.925% of the national quota).
- The maximum recorded length is 360 cm and the maximum recorded weight is 679 kg.
- The bigeye tuna swims at an average speed of 6 km/h but when hunting it can reach 40 km/h.
- It feeds on everything in its path, including smaller tuna.
- The bigeye spends its life migrating between the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

Rich in minerals, vitamins A, E and D, associated with cancer prevention, and Omega 3 fatty acids, which reduce bad cholesterol and prevent cardiovascular diseases. The numerous possibilities in the kitchen for bluefin tuna make it one of our gourmet Atlantic products and, without a doubt, the KING OF TUNA.