

Europeans consume more than twice as much fish and seafood as Americans

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Chicago, IL, September 28, 2004 -- According to Mintel's recent research, Americans are drastically behind in the consumption of fish and seafood in comparison to other parts of the world. Americans each eat an average of 15.6 pounds of fish and seafood per year, compared to 82.9 pounds of chicken and 64.9 pounds of beef. In Europe and Japan, seafood consumption is substantially higher at 37.4 pounds per capita in Europe and an impressive 88 pounds per capita in Japan.

Americans show potential with consumption of fish and seafood, however. When Mintel asked which form of meat they were most tired of eating, only 7% reported fish compared to 40% for poultry and 23% for red meat. The Atkins high-protein/low-carb diet has undeniably had an impact on the consumption of seafood as 20% of Americans say they have increased the amount of meat and fish they eat because of the low-carb diet trend.

Currently, nine out of ten Americans report eating fish and seafood. Those who eat fish and seafood do so on a fairly regular basis with 28% of this group eating it two or more times per week and 32% eating it at least once a week. Just over 17% eat fish and seafood less than once a month.

The fish and seafood market is growing at a healthy pace, with estimated 2004 increases of 7.5%. The market was relatively stagnant in 2002, but a resurgence began in 2003, fueled by a number of converging market factors. The low-carb diet trend spurred an interest in quality protein sources, which caused poultry and red meat prices to skyrocket. This made fish and seafood a more attractive option for consumers, as fish and seafood were relatively higher in cost than other forms of protein. Sales of fish and seafood are forecast to grow 21% by 2009 to reach \$26.8 billion.

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