

The products of the sea

Language

English

Fish, seafood, bivalve and molluscs

A long coastline with many estuaries and port cities in contact with the ocean, fishing communities spread along the coast have brought to the Portuguese people's tables a huge variety of fish, molluscs, bivalves and crustaceans, but have also originated patron saints, sailors' festivities, the blessing of the nets, "*banhos santos*" (blessing baths), "*compromissos*" (commitments) and "*ex-votos marítimos*" (votive offerings to a saint or divinity in fulfilment of a vow), among others.

Since the Antiquity these products of the sea are part of the food of the local populations, as shown by numerous osteological materials and domestic ceramics mainly Phoenicians and Arabic ones, found in archaeological excavations.

The Romans produced and exported the "*garum*", a widely enjoyed fish paste. The "*muxama*", the "smoked ham of the sea", made of tuna fillets, derives from the Arabic *musama* which means dry.

Portugal is the world's third largest consumer of fish, right after Japan and Iceland. It is worth mentioning the importance of OMEGA 3 for the human health in blue fish, sardine, mackerel, tuna, anchovy and horse mackerel, among others. The Portuguese eat many varieties of fish from other origins such as the codfish, the so-called "*Fiel Amigo*" (faithful friend).

In the estuary close to Tavira there are activities such as the salt culture, "*marisqueiro*" (shellfish gatherers) small-scale fishing and capture of molluscs, for centuries.

In the sea in front of Tavira, there were tuna traps for centuries which employed hundreds of fishermen who lived with their families in camps. In the first decades of the 20th century two canneries were established: Tavirense and Balsense, which supplied armies during the 1st World War.

In the last decades bivalves hatcheries and aquaculture were established and more recently new tuna traps were installed.

Nowadays, a significant part of Santa Luzia's working population lives from the octopus capture using the "*covos*" (creels) system thrown into the sea.

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