

One of the most difficult aspects of exporting to the Egyptian market is the strict nature of the inspection system for seafood product imports. Past experience has proven the necessity of ensuring all seafood products entering Egypt adhere to all the inspection requirements. Canadian exporters should ensure sufficient insurance coverage is obtained to safeguard against possible rejection by the Egyptian inspection authorities. Egypt's largest trading partner for seafood products is the European Community. Interested seafood exporters are advised to attend the major European seafood shows and trade fairs such that Egyptian buyers can be contacted and provided with information concerning the seafood products available from Canada. One benefit of such a process would be to enable Canadian seafood exporters to compare currently consumed Egyptian species with comparable species found in Canada. The import market in Egypt is very price sensitive, Canadian exporters should analyze options with respect to species substitution and lower priced under-utilized species.

Egypt is in the process of attempting to increase the tourism sector of the domestic economy. Recent events in the Middle East have hampered these efforts, however, tourism is expected to play an increased role in the Egyptian economy of the future. Longer term trends are encouraging visitors: the wide availability of charter flights and a more sophisticated promotional campaign that stresses not only the country's unique archaeological heritage, but also its good climate and the fact that it has some of the finest beaches and coral reefs in the world. Egypt has a goal of 50,000 hotel rooms by 1994 which is part of a general vigorous drive to upgrade and expand the country's tourist facilities. Possible repercussions of such activities are that in the future the hotel/restaurant trade in Egypt will likely demand more seafood products which are palatable to western tastes. Canadian seafood exporters should explore opportunities which may arise as the result of the increased tourist activity in Egypt in the future. Canadian seafood exporters interested in pursuing sales in Egypt are encouraged to contact any number of representatives in Canada regarding seafood exports to Egypt. Canadian firms should be completely prepared and appropriately informed of all the intricacies involved in exporting seafood products to the Egyptian domestic market.

CONSUMPTION HABITS

Information obtained from a knowledgeable Canadian Trade Commissioner helped provide the following overview of Egyptian seafood consumption habits. Egyptians are traditional fresh fish eaters based on their proximity to a number of major bodies of water. Seafood is served throughout the country, but is most readily available in areas that support a big fishing industry. Popular species in Egypt include porgy, mullet, smelts, canned tuna, sardines, anchovies, and various types of shellfish. Certain seafood species, such as smoked salmon and shrimp, are available in particular locations, but usually at a very high price. Seafood is generally purchased at two different locations: fresh fish and local catches are purchased at open-air markets, while imported and frozen varieties can be found at government seafood stores. Due to the expensive nature of Egyptian government stores, the more affluent purchase seafood at these locations, while the less affluent are more likely to purchase seafood at one of the open-air markets. Seafood comprises an integral part of most Egyptian's diets with consumption on a weekly basis. Seafood products are generally provided whenever a host/hostess is putting on a lavish meal for guests. In addition, caviar served in the original pouch can be found at very expensive prices, and is considered to be an aphrodisiac. Egyptian citizens have certain basic methods of preparing seafood for consumption. Fish is often fried in vegetable oil with spices such as garlic and black pepper. Seafood is also breaded and broiled at high temperatures until it is blackened in colour. Fish is baked in the oven in a mixture of tomato juice, parsley and onions, and as with most seafood dishes, served with rice.