

fried or grilled, or frequently preserved in brine and served chilled. Given the generally high demand for food quality, also in terms of visual presentation, it is necessary that squid colour and texture be similar to fresh-caught, and hence it is a standard requirement for imported products to be frozen at sea. Packing must be neat so that the product displays well, and larger sizes are usually preferred (300 gram or tube lengths of over 20 cm). This size requirement depends, however, on the supply situation at any given moment, and there are periods when smaller sizes may be in general demand. There is no particular market for dried squid.

Salmon:

Smoked and canned salmon are well-known products in the Italian market. Consumption is somewhat limited by the image of salmon as a luxury product, and in fact the prices of these products are such as to merit this reputation. On the other hand this fact also works in favour of consumption insofar as smoked salmon is looked upon as a "must" food for catered parties, special occasions, and as an hors d'oeuvre in good restaurants.

Italy currently imports around 2,500 mt of frozen salmon each year, mainly for smoking. The major source of supply is Canada (1,098 mt in 1988), followed at a distance by the USA (434 mt) and, a recent appearance, Denmark (203 mt). Prior to 1984, only small amounts of fresh salmon were occasionally imported and a relatively limited amount of the imported frozen salmon was thawed and sold as fresh. In the past few years, however, the market for fresh salmon has grown remarkably, jumping to 3,628 mt in 1988, supplied mainly by Denmark (1,940 mt), Norway (906 mt) and Switzerland (637 mt).

Most of the smoked salmon consumed in Italy is smoked locally using imported frozen salmon, an increasing amount is being imported in smoked form (2,368 mt purchased in 1988), mainly from Denmark, France and the UK. Imports of Canadian smoked salmon began only about 5 years ago and have steadily grown to reach a high of 57 mt in 1988. The scant interest in the Canadian smoked product was due to Italian preference for the European smoking method, but also because European packaging quality has generally been superior. Normally, the Italian market prefers large, heavy-smoked sides, dark red in colour and only slightly salted. Due to the fact that the major consumers are restaurants and caterers, it is important that the flesh be firm, capable of being handled and cut into very fine slices without slitting or sticking to the knife. It is mainly these same consumers who also prefer larger sides (3-5 kg), with which there is proportionately little waste. There is a seasonal market for smaller sides (2-3 kg for family-size gift packs at Christmas time. An interesting market has developed in recent years for smoked salmon trimmings and scraps for use by caterers and restaurants in sauces and spreads.