

## FINLAND

Finns are among the largest consumers of fish per capita in the world, 33 kg per person in 1987. Total consumption of seafood is approximately 160,000 tons per year. In 1988, Finland imported 16,000 tons of fish or 10 percent of total consumption. Exports amounted to 5,000 tons. The main domestic catch is Baltic herring, a degenerated form of the Atlantic herring, which is the basic fish diet in Finland. The allowable catch of Baltic herring is 100,000 tons per year.

To protect the domestic fishery, Finland has restricted imports of most fish species which would compete with the domestic catch. Restrictions cover salmon related species, tuna, mackerel and eel, which Finns eat regularly. Other ocean fish can be imported without permits, but the demand is limited to cod and flatfish which are only imported in minor quantities. Imports of fish fillets, fresh or frozen, are free of limitations. Cod, related species and flatfish are at the top of the import statistics and imports of other species are minimal.

Imports of all freshwater species are restricted, and permits are granted only for imports of whitefish, which is imported whole gutted and frozen for smoking. Most of the imported ocean species end up in smokeries like flatfish, mackerel and eel. Only cod related species can be found in frozen blocks in retail stores, the only way frozen fish is retailed in Finland. Consumers will not buy whole frozen fish in Finland when fresh fish is readily available.

Finns are learning to eat shrimp. Total imports of frozen shrimp in 1988 were 305 tons. Lobster is consumed in Finland but not in large quantities. Imports of frozen lobster have remained under 20 tons in recent years. Although 90 percent of imports are of Canadian origin, they are imported from France as are most seafood items with limited demand. There are only three Finnish importers of seafood items, one imports various kinds of seafood, the other is specialized in shellfish and the third imports only shrimp. Volume items (i.e. cod and pollock fillets in 400 g frozen blocks in retail packages with wrappers printed in Finnish and Swedish languages) are imported directly by the four main wholesale and retail chains.

### MAJOR FINNISH SEAFOOD IMPORTERS

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