



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Make a Splash with Maryland Seafood” in October Governor O’Malley Promotes October as “Maryland Seafood Month”

ANNAPOLIS, MD (September 26, 2008) – Are you ready for local sweet fat crabs, succulent oysters and tender, flaky rockfish? Autumn is the perfect time for Maryland seafood because the best of the best is in season at the same time! Governor Martin O’Malley is promoting October as “Maryland Seafood Month,” to celebrate Maryland’s delicious and desirable seafood.

"Seafood is one of Maryland's greatest family traditions and part of our identity," said Governor O’Malley. “Generations of watermen make their living from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and people come from far and wide to enjoy the delicious finfish and shellfish they catch. 'Maryland Seafood Month' is as much a tribute to Maryland's seafood ‘family’ as it is a celebration of our greatest natural resource."

Seafood quality and safety has been, and continues to be, another Maryland tradition. Our seafood is monitored by several state agencies, local health departments and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These agencies conduct regular product and plant inspections and water tests ensuring that Maryland seafood is wholesome. In addition, Maryland crab meat undergoes a voluntary quality control and sanitation inspection. Maryland is the only state that has this extra level of inspection for crab meat. Such rigorous standards are another reason that Maryland crab meat is superior to all other crab meat in the world!

Maryland seafood is more than delicious. An excellent source of high quality protein, seafood is easily digested, generally low in fat, sodium and calories and high in important vitamins and minerals. In addition, seafood contains Omega-3 fatty acids, believed to be effective in lowering cholesterol and the risk of heart disease.

"Eating Maryland seafood is a delicious part of a healthy diet," says Agriculture Secretary Roger Richardson. "October signals the harvest of savory, plump oysters, and is also the best time for crabs, which have been fattening up all summer. Our world-famous state fish, striped bass, known locally as

rockfish, is a tasty and popular fall dish as well. So, 'Make A Splash With Maryland Seafood.' Jump in and enjoy the best the season has to offer."

When purchasing fish, look for signs of freshness and quality: bright, clear eyes, scales that adhere tightly to the skin, skin that springs back when lightly pressed, bright pink or red gills and a mild sea breeze scent. Crabs and oysters should be purchased live. Crabs should be lively and you should discard any dead crabs before cooking. Oysters purchased in the shell should have tightly-closed shells or should close when touched. Both types of shellfish should be cooked the same day as purchased. Always rinse finfish and shellfish with cold water before cooking. Cooked seafood, as with all cooked food, should not come into contact with or be stored in the same container as raw food. This is to protect from cross-contamination of bacteria that is normally found on raw food products. As with beef, poultry and pork, proper cooking kills bacteria in seafood. Careful clean up of preparation area and utensils is always important with all raw food products.

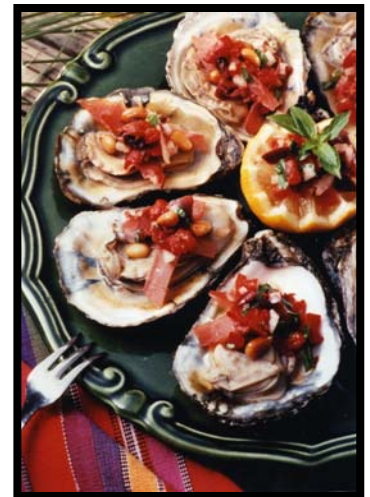
For your free "Make A Splash With Maryland Seafood" brochure containing seven recipes for October Maryland Seafood Month, log onto www.marylandseafood.org or send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to: Make A Splash With Maryland Seafood, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401 or e-mail: ecclesjo@mda.state.md.us.

Try this tempting new recipe in October: *Oysters Baked on the Half Shell, Mediterranean-Style* (below).

OYSTERS BAKED ON THE HALF SHELL, MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE

Coarse salt sufficient to cover baking pans to ¼ inch depth

- 2 dozen Maryland oysters, in shell
- 2 slices prosciutto, cut into 24 strips
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts
- ¼ cup sherry wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon roasted red pepper, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon pitted Kalamata olives, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced basil



Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Spread coarse salt evenly over shallow baking pans with an edge, such as pizza pan. Open oysters, letting oysters remain in deep half of shell; discard other half. Arrange oysters in single layer on salt. Place prosciutto strip on each oyster. Sprinkle each oyster with ¼ teaspoon pine nuts. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes until edges of oysters begin to curl. Meanwhile, combine the vinegar, white wine, olives, shallot, and basil in a small bowl. Remove oysters and serve with a spoonful of Mediterranean-style sauce. Makes 2 dozen.