

OYSTER COMPASS



Navigating
What Makes
OYSTER
Varietals Unique





Consider Each Oyster.

For any oyster, consider the following four elements to help you understand what makes each oyster varietal unique. Start in the South and go counterclockwise around the compass as you consider each oyster.

Species

Even though they may be related, different species of oysters have different flavors and qualities. Common species include Eastern oysters (also called virginicas), Pacific oysters, Olympia oysters, European flats, and many others.

Environment

Oysters take on the flavor of the environment of where they are grown, most notably the salinity. Time of year can change the taste, with sweeter flavors in the cooler months and savory flavors in the warmer months.

Nurture

Farmers make decisions that can dramatically influence an oyster, affecting the shell shape and cleanliness as well as the meat plumpness. Examples include different growing methods like floating bags or beach culture, and handling methods such as tumbling and harvest size.

Who & Why

Every oyster has a story. While this may not affect the flavor, think about who grew these oysters and why farmers go out day after day to bring this oyster to you.

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For more information and to learn more about oysters, go to SeaGrant.NOAA.gov/Our-Work/SFA.