



# **The next time you enjoy Mississippi seafood, celebrate the people who brought it to you**

BY RYAN BRADLEY AND ERIC BRAZER  
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October is National Seafood Month, and there's no better place to celebrate seafood than right here in the Magnolia State.

What Mississippi may lack in coastline length, it more than makes up for in seafood heritage and pride. Popular delights like oysters, shrimp, flounder and blue crabs — just to name a few — are all pulled from the briny waters off our coast and shipped fresh to seafood lovers across the state and this great nation.

The Mississippi seafood industry had a profound impact on the Gulf Coast by establishing itself as a diverse immigrant community that led it to be called the “Seafood Capital of the World” as far back as 1869. In 1890 alone, local canneries reportedly processed 2 million pounds of oysters and 614,000 pounds of shrimp. Twelve years later, those numbers had skyrocketed as 12 canneries reported a combined catch of nearly 6 million pounds of oysters and 4.4 million pounds of shrimp.

Over the years, Slovenians, Cajuns, Eastern Europeans and Vietnamese are among those who came to Mississippi for its seafood bounty, its canning industry and its promise of opportunity for all.

Fast forward to 2015, when Mississippi landed 306 million pounds of seafood — more than any other Gulf state but Louisiana. Current landings support nearly 10,000 jobs and generate more than \$239 million in economic value.

Mississippi has launched an extensive marketing campaign to promote its proud seafood culture. The Mississippi Seafood Trail was established by the Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association in 2014 to reinvigorate the local seafood

industry and help area restaurants increase sales of genuine Gulf seafood in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

The Trail's focus was to promote restaurants that proudly serve wild-caught, genuine Gulf seafood. With 69 participating restaurants across 360 miles from the Delta to the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi Seafood Trail makes it easy for tourists and residents to find establishments that offer genuine, delicious Gulf seafood.

At the heart of Mississippi's seafood success is a strong commitment to science. Fishermen and women team up with scientists to improve data collection and the science used to manage our fisheries. Managers work with fishermen to develop and implement policies that rely on sound science to protect both the fish and the fishermen. Government workers and fishermen collaborate to identify and fund opportunities to collaboratively solve problems.

It is truly a team effort, and one that has its roots in the strong Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is our nation's bipartisan fishery backbone, and it is something all Mississippians should be proud of. Thanks to Magnuson-Stevens's science-based conservation requirements, 41 fish stocks have been rebuilt nationwide since 2001, and the number of fish stocks needing protection remains near all-time lows. Healthy fish stocks ensure profitable fishing businesses and a steady supply of sustainable seafood not just for today — but for future generations of fishermen, watermen and satisfied consumers like you.

Mississippi's culture is a blend of traditions from a diverse community of people who pride themselves on their seafood history and heritage. When you purchase Mississippi Gulf seafood, you're not only getting the highest-quality seafood, you're supporting the state's rich local culture and unique way of life. That's a year-round reality we are celebrating this month.

So the next time you enjoy a dozen shrimp, red snapper fillet, crab cake or bowl of shrimp gumbo, take a moment to celebrate the people who helped bring this seafood to you.

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*to ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed so fishing businesses can thrive and fishing communities can exist for future generations.*



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