

Squid

Of the world's many squid species, it's the longfin, *Loligo pealei*, that finds a perfect home year 'round in the cool ocean waters surrounding Long Island. Just how squid and other commercially important fish interact in the deep water habitat was the subject of NYSG research conducted by Tim Essington, formerly of Stony Brook University's Marine Sciences Research Center (now at the University of Washington) and SG Scholars Mary Hunsicker and Michelle Staudinger.

The team found that in deep, offshore waters, squid consume the young of summer flounder, monkfish, bluefish, and whiting, especially in the winter and spring when squid are at their largest and young fish at their smallest. But squid themselves, in turn, are a major part of the diet of large bluefish, large whiting, and are important for all sizes of summer flounder. The important roles of squid in the food chain both as predator and as prey should be factored in when developing fisheries management plans for it and other marine species.

However, in recent years, squid has become an important harvested species as New York commercial fishermen have landed approximately 10 million pounds on Long Island. Much of the local squid catch is processed for export, but a significant number of large squid are sold locally.

Although consumed worldwide, squid has only recently become popular in the US. Squid is remarkable in that an unusually large proportion of this mollusk—80 percent—is edible including its tentacles, arms, and fins. Its firm, delicately flavored flesh is low in fat. The body of a small squid is often cooked whole and stuffed, while larger squid are cut into strips or rings, as in the popular Mediterranean-style calamari. Squid can be baked, boiled, deep fried, sauteed or used in salads and pasta sauces. It is easy to cook and will be tender and sweet if you follow this simple rule: Cook squid quickly at high heat (as in Bestor's recipes) or simmer at low heat for at least 30 minutes. Anything in between is likely to have a tough or rubbery texture.

*Bringing
Science to
the Shore*

Grilled Squid with Black Sesame (Ika Goma-Yaki)

squid, cleaned, skinned and filleted lengthwise
(if using frozen squid, make sure it is fully defrosted)
salt
egg whites
2-4 tbs. black sesame seeds
lemon wedges

Method

Squid needs to be cooked quickly over a hot fire; cook this over the hottest possible charcoal fire. If cooked too long, squid becomes tough. To enhance the tenderness, score both sides of the flesh with a very sharp knife. The Japanese technique is to score the outside in a cross-hatched pattern about 1/16 inch deep and 1/8 inch apart and to score the inside flesh lengthwise every inch or so. Because squid shrinks and curls when it is cooked, use skewers to keep it flat. Two long metal skewers inserted at angles lengthwise along the edges meeting at the tip of the squid should do the trick. Sprinkle salt on the inside of the squid, brush the outside with egg white and dredge in sesame seeds. Grill over hot heat, first the outside (sesame seed side) for about 2 minutes, then turn over and complete cooking for one more minute. Do not over cook. Serve immediately with lemon wedges.



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Seafood Corner

Marinated Grilled Squid (Ika Aji-Yaki)

squid, cleaned, skinned and filleted
lengthwise (if using frozen squid, make
sure it is fully defrosted)
cup mirin (sweet cooking sake)
cup soy sauce
your choice of: lemon juice, grated
ginger, or finely chopped garlic

Method

Prepare the squid fillets (scoring) as above. Make marinade with sweet cooking sake, soy sauce and your choice of lemon juice, grated ginger, or finely chopped garlic. Marinate squid fillets for 30 to 45 minutes. Insert skewers after marinating. Follow grilling instructions above. Cook over very hot charcoal. Don't overcook.

*Traditional Japanese recipes adapted by
Victoria and Ted Bestor*

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