



Langostino

Chefs prize this lobster-like crustacean for its cost and size

By Steven Hedlund

Fried in a buttery breading and served in a cardboard box or braised with white wine, garlic and parsley and placed over spinach, langostino is ideal for an array of dishes at all levels of foodservice — from fast food to fine dining.

Spanish for “little lobster,” langostino is a small, lobster-like crustacean. Like lobsters, langostinos are decapods, meaning they have 10 legs.

The taste and texture of langostino meat, which is found in the creature’s inch-long tail, is similar to American or spiny lobster tail meat. But the similarities end there.

Langostino is actually a member of the Galatheididae family, along with hermit and porcelain crabs.

There are four species of langostino commonly available in the U.S. market: *Pleuroncodes monodon*, or langostino colorado, and *Cervimunida johni*, or langostino amarillo, are harvested by Chilean trawlers. Meat sizes range from 61/100- to 100/150-count for *P. monodon* and 150/200- to 200/300-count for *C. johni*.

The Chilean government has reduced its langostino fishery to protect

the resource from overfishing. As a result, El Salvador has increased its production of *P. planipes*, according to one U.S. importer. *P. planipes* yields a 200/300-count meat size.

The fourth species, *Munida gregaria*, also called squat lobster, lobster krill and New Zealand langostino is imported from New Zealand.

The Food and Drug Administration says “lobster” alone can’t be used to depict langostino.

BUYER’S TIP

Don’t confuse langostino with another lobster-like crustacean, the “langoustine” (*Nephrops norvegicus*). The French call langoustine “lobsterette.” It’s also known as scampi, Norway lobster and Dublin Bay prawn.

So, when labeling, make sure to apply a modifier such as “langostino” or “squat.”

What makes langostino so appealing to chefs is its cost and size.

Langostino is roughly half the price of American and spiny lobster. IQF langostino tail meat is usually tagged in the \$7 to \$8 range per pound, versus at least \$15 for American and spiny lobster tails.

Moreover, the bite-sized portions of meat are perfect for a variety of dishes — from salads to soups to pasta.

Two of the four entrées Red Lobster featured during its annual Lobsterfest promotion this year contained langostino: Lobster Bisque, (\$4.99 per cup and \$6.99 per bowl) and Rock Is-



Bite-sized langostino tail morsels are an ideal addition to bisques and soups.

land Stuffed Tilapia (\$13.50). Langostino is also an ingredient in Lobster Lover’s Dream (\$27.50).

At the posh Zeffirino Ristorante, an Italian eatery at The Venetian Resort, Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Executive Chef Francesco Schintu braises langostino with white wine, garlic and parsley and places it over spinach to create Code di Scampi in Fricassee, an

\$18 appetizer.

At Bon Appetito in suburban Cleveland, pecan-crusted langostino is tossed on a salad with mixed greens, cucumbers, apples, toasted almonds and raspberry vinaigrette for \$14.99. And at The Boathouse in Wildwood, N.J., langostino is mixed with shrimp and scallops to create Seafood Alfredo and Seafood Fra Diavolo for \$19.95 each.

LANGOSTINO AT A GLANCE



Photo courtesy of Northeastfishnet

What’s it taste like?

Langostino has a sweet, delicate flavor, more like lobster or crab than shrimp.

How do you cook it?

Pre-cooked langostino meat offers convenience and no waste. It is an ideal size for salads, soups, stuffings, seafood sauces or pizza and can be sautéed or stirred to serve over pasta. Langostino tail meat can be used in recipes calling for cooked lobster, crab or shrimp.

Substitutions

Lobster
Crab
Shrimp

What’s it look like?

The edible morsel of meat in the langostino is found in its inch-long tail. It looks like cooked shrimp meat, and the texture resembles shrimp more than lobster tail meat.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 100g/3.5 oz. (raw)

Amount per serving	
Calories	71
Fat Calories	0
Total Fat	0 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	143 mg
Sodium	500 mg
Protein	17 g
Omega-3	N/A

For information on langostino and 99 other seafood species, order the *Seafood Handbook Professional Edition*, with two free posters, online at www.seafoodhandbook.com.