

Basa/Swai

Scientific names: *Pangasius boccourti*; *P. hypophthalmus*

Market name: *Basa, bocourti, bocoutri fish, swai*

Common names: *Basa, basa catfish; swai, tra, Vietnamese catfish*



The Basa Story

When trade with Vietnam resumed in 1994, U.S. seafood importers started shipping fillets from a Vietnamese catfish called basa, or bocourti. But most of what's sold in the market today as basa isn't basa. Real basa, *P. bocourti*, is one of 21 species in the Pangasiidae family of catfish found throughout Southeast Asia. Cambodian and Vietnamese fish farmers have raised basa in cages along the Mekong River for decades. But *P. hypophthalmus*, or swai, known locally as tra, has become the preferred farm species. Inferior the basa, but faster and cheaper to raise, swai has been marketed as China sole, river cobbler and even basa, adding to the confusion of unwary buyers. Also labeled catfish, it was eagerly accepted as a cheap alternative to the farmed U.S. species. But such labeling is no longer allowed, following a Food and Drug Administration ruling that only species from the family Ictaluridae can be sold as true catfish.

Product Profile

Basa is a tasty fish, with a delicate texture and nice white flesh. The fast-flowing water of the Mekong give the meat a clean, fresh flavor. Tra tends to be coarser and more grainy than true basa.

You can tell true basa from the tra by appearance. Basa fillets are whiter than tra fillets, which are usually more of a beige color. Tra fillets are also thinner than basa fillets.

FLAVOR



TEXTURE



You Should Know...

Standards can vary among Vietnamese processors, so before making any big basa buys, do some cuttings in your test kitchen with samples from a variety of packers. You may be surprised by the differences in quality and price.

Cooking Tips & Methods

Basa is a versatile fish whose flesh is mild enough to take on other flavors but flavorful enough to hold its own in simple preparations. It remains moist during cooking. Whether to go with true basa or cheaper tra fillets depends on the application. If you want a fish you can bread and fry for a buffet line, for example, go with the less

Primary Product Forms

Fresh

Fillets (sknls/bnls)

Frozen

Fillets (sknls/bnls)

Value Added

Portions

Strips

Breaded

Nutrition Facts

SERVING SIZE:
100G/3.5 OZ. (raw)

AMOUNT PER SERVING

Calories	90
Fat Calories	36
Total Fat	4 g
Saturated Fat	1.5 g
Cholesterol	45 mg
Sodium	50 mg
Protein	13 g
Omega-3	N/A

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Substitutions *Sea bass, Dogfish, Ma*¹⁹

COOKING METHODS

Bake Broil Fry Grill Poach Sauté Smoke Steam

GLOBAL SUPPLY

Vietnam

- Farmed
- Wild
- Farmed and Wild



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SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Fresh ■

Froz. ■

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Harvests are heaviest from late summer to early autumn.											

Basa Fillets 7-9 oz. Bnls/Sknls	264950	1/15 lb.
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Information provided by Seafood Business