



# Barramundi Fact Sheet

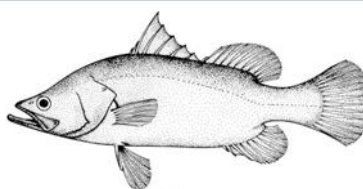


Image courtesy of FAO

## Basic Biology

Latin name: *Lates calcarifer*

Description: A large, warm-water perch-like fish native to the Indo-West Pacific Ocean.

Barramundi are catadramous, meaning they inhabit freshwater rivers for three or four years then migrate to salt-water estuaries to spawn. Barramundi are related to snook.

Domestic Availability: In the U.S., Australis Aquaculture raises barramundi in a close-containment system in Turner Falls, Massachusetts. See [www.thebetterfish.com](http://www.thebetterfish.com) for more information.

## Sustainability

- Barramundi are well suited to aquaculture. These fish are fast growing and robust, tolerating a range of environmental variables including both fresh and saltwater, and do well in high density settings. Barramundi can grow to harvestable size in six months to two years.
- They are commercially harvested from the wild and farmed in Southeast Asia, Australia and the U.S. The majority of farmed barramundi production occurs in floating cages. Some farms in Australia and the U.S. use recirculating tank systems, a more sustainable method.
- Though naturally carnivorous, barramundi can thrive on a grain-based diet in proper conditions (i.e. optimal temperature, salinity, and oxygen levels) but still produce high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. In commercial farms, feed conversion ratios (FCRs) of 1.6–1.8:1 are typical (i.e. 1.6 lbs of feed is needed to produce 1 lb of barramundi). Australis Aquaculture has achieved a FCR of near 1:1 by providing a nutrient rich diet and ideal environmental conditions that lower the fishes' energy use. In addition, Australis has minimized the use of fishmeal and fish oil, but what they do use is sourced from sustainable fisheries.
- Australis operates an indoor, closed-containment farm in Massachusetts as well as an open-water farm in Vietnam. None of their facilities use hormones, antibiotics or colorants.
- Australis' U.S. farm raises non-native barramundi, but escapes from a closed-containment facility are nearly impossible. This facility purifies and reuses 99% of their water and fish manure is filtered out and used as fertilizer on local farms.
- Australis' Vietnam farm raises fish that are derived from local strains of barramundi. These fish are hatched in land-based tanks then transferred to sea cages. The farm is sited in an eco-tourism zone with very good water quality. Stocking densities are kept very low and extended fallowing of cages between batches prevents any build-up of waste or other long-term effects to the local ecosystem. The sea cages are physically cleaned instead of chemically treated, and cages are inspected twice daily to minimize the chance of escapes.

## Info for Chefs and Servers

- Barramundi is mild, white and flaky - often described as similar to snapper, halibut and striped bass. Barramundi takes well to all cooking methods and preparation styles.
- Like local groupers and sea basses, barramundi can change gender. They start life as males and then become female around 6-8 years of age.

Source: FAO – [www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Lates\\_calcarifer/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Lates_calcarifer/en); Fishbase – [www.fishbase.org](http://www.fishbase.org); Australis Aquaculture – [www.thebetterfish.com](http://www.thebetterfish.com)