

DETAILS

Brad Pitt

A PHOTO PORTFOLIO
BY MARK SELIGER



AMERICA'S NEXT
GREAT FOOD CITY

THE COAT YOU
NEED THIS SEASON

WHY ANDY
COHEN MAY BE
THE SMARTEST
MAN ON TV



Gulf oysters

PEAK SEASON:

Late fall through winter

"Oysters from the Gulf have this distinctive creamy flavor, leaning toward umami—they're meaty," says John Currence, chef and owner of City Grocery restaurant group in Oxford, Mississippi. "They have a much greater spectrum of preparations" than smaller, minerally East Coast oysters. At Snackbar, Currence serves Gulf oysters on the half shell with spicy pork-belly mignonette and pickled beech mushrooms.

fishermanscoveseafood.com; \$6 a dozen, in the shell, \$36.95 for a shucked half gallon, plus overnight shipping (always buy local when possible)



Nantucket Bay scallops

PEAK SEASON:

November through early winter

"Nantucket Bay scallops are especially good," says Eric Korsh, chef at New York City's North End Grill. "When you get them less than a day old, they're like sugar drops." Korsh is preparing the scallops as a raw appetizer with pickled aji dulce peppers—light smokiness, moderate heat—that he started growing in the restaurant's roof garden last summer specifically for this dish.

gliddensislandseafood.com; \$25 to \$29 a pound, plus overnight shipping



Maine uni

PEAK SEASON:

December through February

Chef Tony Messina, of the Boston sashimi bar Uni, respects sea urchin from California, which is on his menu much of the year. "But when the Maine uni comes in, I'm working with it whenever possible," he says. "It has a lot of funk, in a good way—I equate it to gaminess." The restaurant's signature dish is the creamy, briny Smoked Uni Spoon: a dollop of the roe topped with a quail-egg yolk and osetra caviar.

brownetrading.com; \$40 for two four-ounce trays, plus overnight shipping



Northern California Dungeness crab

PEAK SEASON:

Mid-November through winter

Dungeness can withstand a high-heat roast. "The body is sweet, the legs meaty, the claws salty," says Ray Tang, chef-owner at Presidio Social Club in San Francisco. Tang's chile-garlic-roasted crab accompanies buttery spaghetti with bread crumbs and grilled lemon; he leaves the shells on, and the pasta soaks up the chile-garlic crab juice that seeps out.

pikeplacefish.com; \$40 for a two-and-a-half-pound whole crab, plus overnight shipping

Winter Is Coming (and So Is the Best Seafood)

RIGHT ABOUT NOW, THERE'S NOT MUCH FOR CHEFS IN MOST PARTS of the country to get excited about (how thrilling are turnips, really?). But lower temperatures do get cooks geeking out on seafood—shellfish, in particular, some varieties of which are at their prime in colder waters because of where they are in their life cycle. Take oysters from the Gulf of Mexico. They spawn in summer, which makes them milky and flabby before they turn clear and firm as winter approaches, says Ryan Prewitt, chef at Peche Seafood Grill in New Orleans. "In October, they get a lot better, in November they start to pick up steam, and by January and February, we're getting our best." Diners, ever more attuned to what's in season, are savvy enough to pick up on these nuances, which is why restaurants are changing their dishes and planning farther in advance to highlight local gems. Here's how four chefs will make the most of their short time together with the seaworthiest.