

KNOW YOUR SQUID PRODUCTS

Distinguish between common squid species:

- Loligo is the world's most demanded squid for its soft, chewy mantle (tube) and its sweet flavor.
- No fewer than 16 species of loligo squid are fished in the world by fishers in a variety of regions. Nearly 80% of this raw material is sent to China, India, Taiwan or Thailand for reprocessing.
- Illex is another common food squid. Its double mantle wall means it is much firmer than loligo.

Handling determines product quality:

- Tearing results from processors pulling the wings off the mantle. Holes may result from cutting the wings too close to the mantle.
- Check that the beak was removed from the core of the tentacles as well as the rigid inner shell from the top of the mantle.
- Innards (e.g. ink sack) present in the mantle suggest poor cleaning.

Look carefully at the squid's color and texture:

- A fresh skinned squid is white; a fresh unskinned squid is purple.
- Pink color suggests the onset of spoilage and is usually accompanied by a sweet odor.
- Yellow color suggests oxydization and is usually accompanied by a sour odor and flavor.
- White or tan (i.e. skinned) is the preferred coloring.
- The solution used in freezing affects the texture and taste of squid meat. For example brine gives a faint salty taste and phosphate does not affect taste but gives a slightly soapy texture.

Check that weight and distribution are as advertised:

- Excess water in the mantle often identifies short weighted product.
- An order of "tubes and tentacles" should consist of one set of tentacles per tube. Some users demand tubes only, meaning some producers will dilute "tubes and tentacles" orders with excess tentacles.

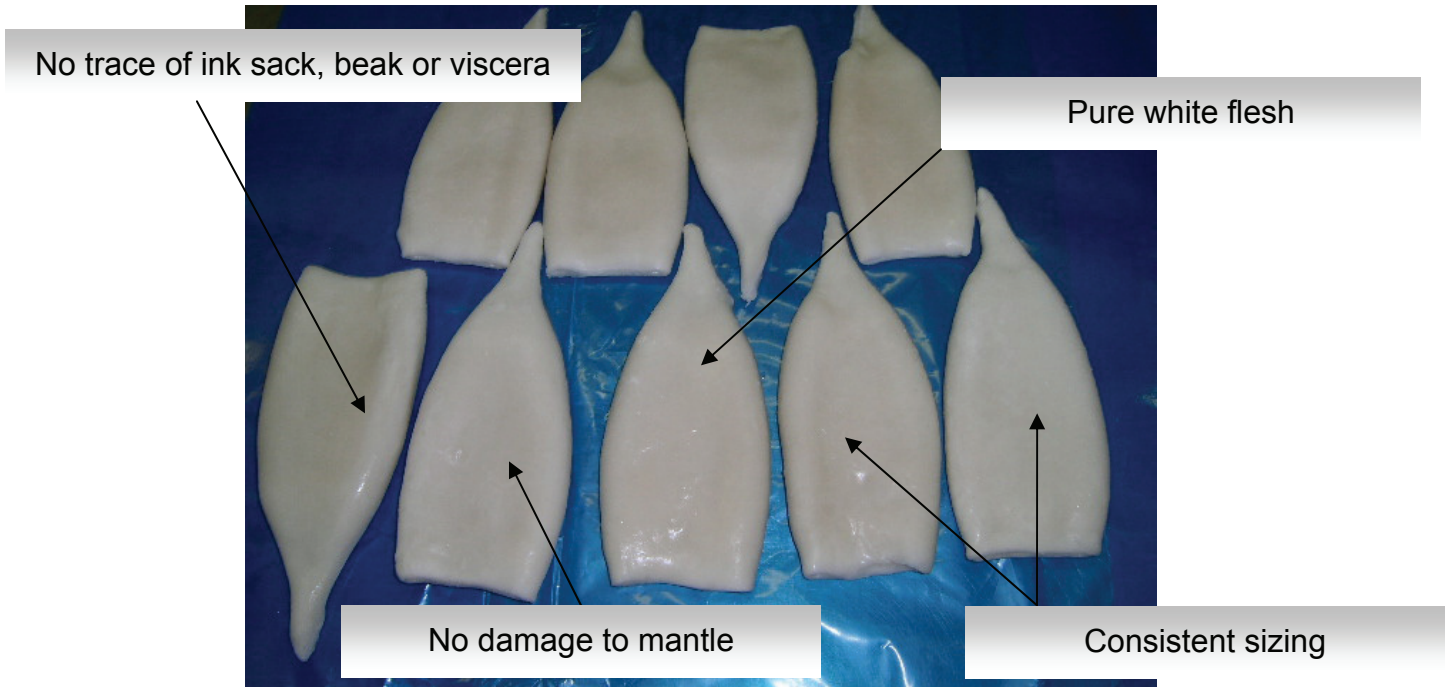
Learn to recognize inferior quality products:

- It is important for seafood buyers to distinguish between superior and inferior quality product.
- Differentiate superior products from inferior by one or a number of the following characteristics.

Squid Tubes & Tentacles		
Feature	Superior quality	Inferior quality
Preparation		
Beak	Removed	Present
Damage to mantle	None	Tearing, holes
Ink sack	Removed	Present
Internal shell	Removed	Present
Meat		
Color	White to tan	Pink suggests spoilage Yellow suggests oxydization
Odor	Sea fresh	Sweet, sour, rancid
Weight and count		
Water in mantles	Minimal	Considerable
Count	tubes = sets tentacles	tubes < sets tentacles

See the back of the page for example photos

Example of superior quality squid tubes:



Examples of inferior quality squid tubes:

