



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FISH PROCESSING**

As many of our guests ask about options for processing their catch, we have put together this summary to assist you. As part of our respect for the natural resources of the Queen Charlotte Islands, we ensure that any fish retained are handled to preserve its freshness. This starts with treatment of your catch while out on the water where we will bleed your fish and keep it on ice and out of the sun to ensure it is the best it can be regardless of the processing option you choose.

### **Salmon Processing Options**

There are two broad options for processing your salmon: 1) send to a commercial fish processor for custom products such steaks, canning and smoking; or 2) preparation by your guide at the lodge. In accordance with the laws of Canada, we are limited in the number of fish processing options we can offer at the lodge and as such we have made arrangements with two commercial fish processors to ensure you have a complete list of options to choose from. These commercial options are particularly important for larger fish where the options available at the lodge can often result in cut sizes that are larger than desired by many guests.

#### **Salmon Preparation at a Commercial Fish Processor**

Sea Pak - Located in Masset, this processor will custom cut steaks, meal sized pieces, and vacuum pack. They also do a multitude of different fish smoking processes, including lox, hot smoke and candy but do not offer canning services. Since they are local, if we can get fish to them on the first two days of a three day trip, or the first three days of a four day trip, we can usually have a custom cut order returned in time for you to take it home with you – orders for smoked fish take more time and will not be available to take home at the end of your trip. If the order is not ready when you leave for home, Sea Pak is also able to ship orders directly to your home should you desire. Sea Pak brochures that more fully explain the services they offer are available in the lodge.

St. Jean's Cannery – Located in Nanaimo, this processor will custom cut steaks, meal sized pieces, and vacuum pack. They also do a multitude of different smoking processes, including lox, hot smoke and candy. St. Jean's has a few more options than Sea Pak when it comes to smoking, including adding peppercorns and other spices to the process. St. Jean's also specializes in canning fish and produce a canned smoked salmon that is "to die for". St. Jean's will ship your finished order to your home as long as you are within the service area of Fed-Ex. St. Jean's brochures that more fully explain the services they offer are available in the lodge.

If you choose a commercial processor, at the lodge we will clean your fish (including removal of the fins, head and tail) and then send your fish to the processor of your choice.

### **Salmon Preparation at the Lodge for Shipment Home with You**

We are able to offer you the following processing options for your salmon if you choose to have your catch processed at the lodge.

Whole fish: This option is often chosen by our guests who prefer to take their fish to a butcher at home where it can be made into steaks or other custom cuts. In this case your fish will be cleaned (including removal of the fins, head and tail) and bagged. For smaller fish we can vacuum pack the meat however larger fish will go into a poly fish bag which is sealed with a simple tie.

Fillets: This is the most popular option chosen by our guests and results in a cut that is very popular for those who wish to oven bake or BBQ their fish. In this case we clean (including removal of the fins, head and tail) your fish and then utilize a method called a princess fillet whereby your fish is separated from the majority of the bones into two equal pieces with the collars and bellies attached. The resulting two fillets are then vacuum packed in separate packages. In the case of bigger fish, we can further process the two fillets as follows:

1. Fillet Scoring - we cut the flesh of the fish without cutting right through the skin and then vacuum pack the two filets. At home you can open up one of the fillets and snap off pieces like a popsicle and then store the remainder of the fish for another occasion. This method works well when a whole fillet is too much for one meal.
2. Fillet Halving - For bigger fish like the Chinook, we can cut each of your fillets into 2 pieces. The fillets will then be vacuum packed and placed side by side in one bag making it obvious that they represent one fish, and the bag will be clearly labeled with:
  - a. the number and species of salmon - e.g., "one Chinook";
  - b. the number of fillets - "two fillets";
  - c. the number of pieces - "four pieces"; and
  - d. the angler's name and fishing license number.

By using the princess fillet process we retain the collar and belly that is considered to be the best part of the fish. That said, the collar and belly of the salmon contain more bones and as such the princess fillet will leave you with more bones than other processes. Should you wish us to minimize the bones and remove the collar and belly we will do so for you, or it is a simple process to do so yourself at home.

Regardless of how we prepare your salmon at the lodge, in most cases guests prefer to have their fish frozen before shipment home however, we can also simply refrigerate the meat should you desire. Any fish processed by the lodge will be packed in special wax coated boxes for your trip home.

## Halibut and Bottom Fish Processing Options

As is the case for processing salmon, we can either process your halibut and bottom fish at the lodge or send them to either Sea Pak or St. Jean's. In many cases with larger halibut, our guests will choose to send their fish to either Sea Pak or St. Jean's to be processed into meal sized portions. Both Sea Pak and St. Jean's also have additional fish processing options for halibut and bottom fish and we encourage you to look at the brochure information available at the lodge for more information. One option we particularly like is the candied smoked halibut offered by St. Jean's.

If you choose to have your halibut or bottom fish processed at the lodge, the following are the options that we are allowed to offer to you in accordance with the laws of Canada.

Halibut must be filleted in such a way that skin is left on each fillet.

- a) **Halibut weighing 14 kg. (30 lbs) or less - may be cut into four fillets.** The four fillets must be packaged and placed in one bag so that one bag represents one fish.
- b) **Halibut weighing between 14 kg. and 34 kg. (30 and 75 lbs) – each of the original four fillets mentioned in (a) above may be cut into two pieces.** This will result in the fish being cut into a maximum of eight pieces. These pieces must be packaged and numbered in a sequence, e.g., 1 of 8, 2 of 8, 3 of 8 etc. to indicate that eight pieces of halibut represent one fish.
- c) **Halibut over 34 kg. (75 lbs) - each of the original four fillets mentioned in (a) above may be cut into four pieces.** This will result in your fish being cut into a maximum of 16 pieces. These pieces must be packaged and numbered as outlined in (b) above. We strongly recommend sending any halibut over 75 pounds to an outside processor due to the size of fillets that come from a fish this large.

Most bottom fish (such as Rockfish and smaller Ling Cod) are of a size that one fillet will feed a small family. As such we normally vacuum package each fillet separately however, we can also cut bigger fillets into 2 pieces and vacuum package separately should you desire a smaller portion.

As is the case for salmon, regardless of how we prepare your halibut and bottom fish at the lodge, in most cases guests prefer to have their fish frozen before shipment home however, we can also simply refrigerate the meat should you desire. Any fish processed by the lodge will be packed in special wax coated boxes for your trip home.

**All salmon, halibut and bottom fish processed at the lodge are included in the price of your trip.**

**All costs of commercial fish processors for salmon, halibut and bottom fish, and related shipping charges, will be billed to you directly by the commercial processor and are not included in your trip price.**