

# ACADIAN STURGEON AND CAVIAR TECHNICAL HANDBOOK



[www.acadian-sturgeon.com](http://www.acadian-sturgeon.com)

*"You don't taste; you discover"*

*-Cornel*

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In memory of Stanley Whelpley, Sturgeon Fisherman



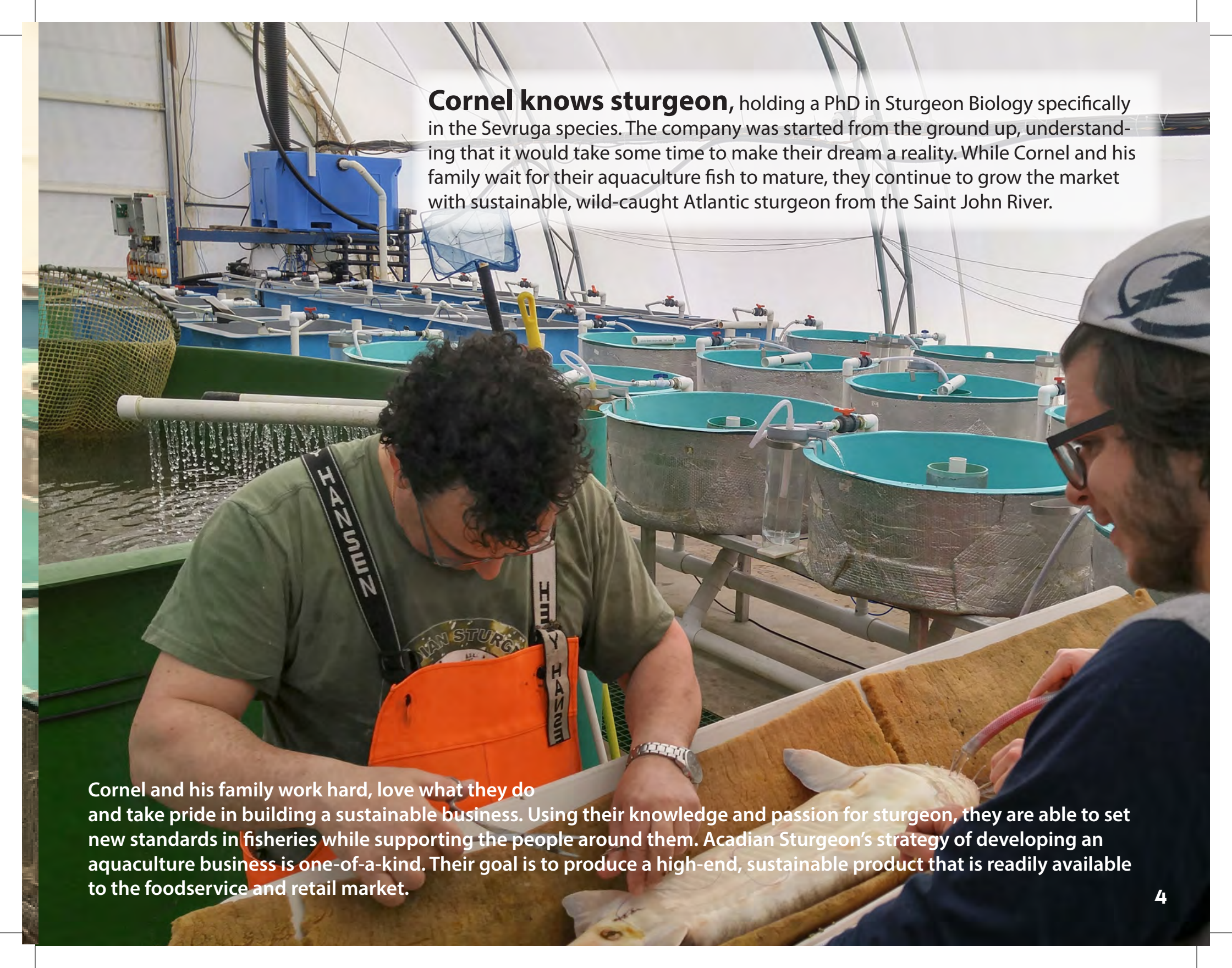
*Ceapa*

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# THE STORY

Cornel Ceapa has dedicated the greater part of his life to studying and working with sturgeon. Acadian Sturgeon was founded in 2005 shortly after Cornel and his wife Dorina immigrated to Canada from Romania. It is truly a family business; Cornel works closely with Dorina, their son Michael and a few employees to manage all aspects of this very complex business. It starts with artificial spawning, taking care of the larvae and juveniles, harvesting the fish, preparing the caviar, smoking and packaging the sturgeon meat, while managing all the daily operations.

A man with curly hair, wearing a green t-shirt and an orange apron with 'HANSUN' written on it, is focused on a large, light-colored fish on a wooden cutting board. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist. To his right, another person wearing a grey cap and glasses is partially visible, looking towards the fish. The background shows a boat deck with several large, circular aquaculture tanks. Some tanks are blue, and others are silver with blue interiors. The tanks are connected by a network of white pipes and hoses. The overall scene is an aquaculture facility on a boat.

**Cornel knows sturgeon**, holding a PhD in Sturgeon Biology specifically in the *Sevruga* species. The company was started from the ground up, understanding that it would take some time to make their dream a reality. While Cornel and his family wait for their aquaculture fish to mature, they continue to grow the market with sustainable, wild-caught Atlantic sturgeon from the Saint John River.

Cornel and his family work hard, love what they do and take pride in building a sustainable business. Using their knowledge and passion for sturgeon, they are able to set new standards in fisheries while supporting the people around them. Acadian Sturgeon's strategy of developing an aquaculture business is one-of-a-kind. Their goal is to produce a high-end, sustainable product that is readily available to the foodservice and retail market.



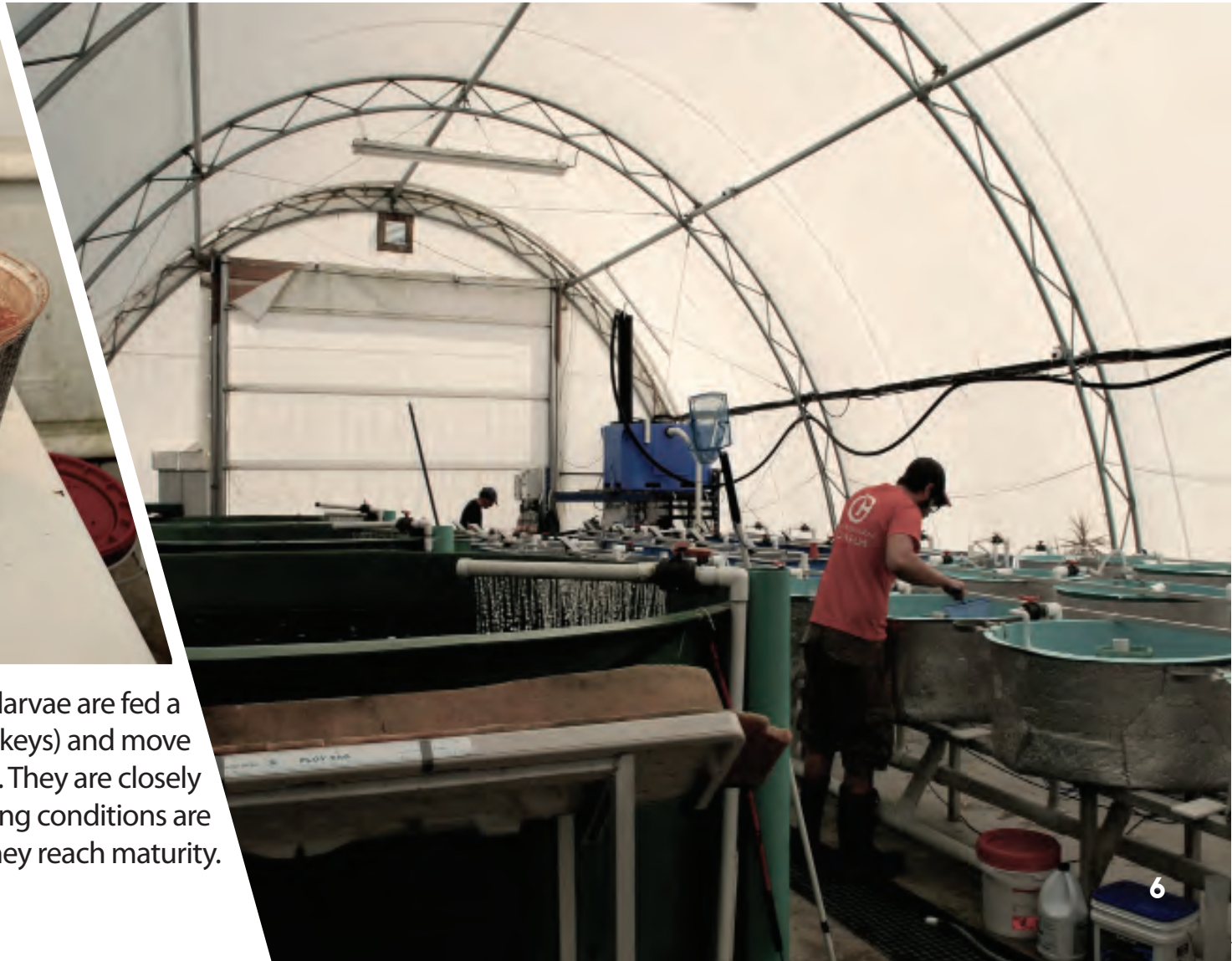
# THE HATCHERY

It takes at least 10 years for a sturgeon to grow to a harvestable size and for the eggs to be ready for caviar production. In the meantime, Acadian Sturgeon continues to work on hatching and growing shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon.

Usually aquaculture is developed when it is too late after over fishing a stock. This is all wrong. At Acadian Sturgeon, they use a balanced approach of coexistence between sustainable, wild harvest and aquaculture production. The goal is to create quality farmed products that are as close as possible to that of the wild fish.

**The hatchery and aquaculture capabilities were created with a land based grow-out approach under development on over 6.5 acres of land in Carter's Point, New Brunswick.**

Acadian Sturgeon also sells live sturgeon for aquaculture and restocking. They ship fertilized eggs and larvae for restocking to countries surrounding the Baltic Sea (Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) and to sturgeon farms in Europe, Asia and the USA. They take pride in only using sustainable fishing practices and sell their fish globally to help re-populate areas that have lost most of their stock due to overfishing.



Once the eggs have hatched, the larvae are fed a healthy diet of Brine Shrimp (sea-monkeys) and move through a series of tanks as they grow. They are closely monitored to ensure their living conditions are favourable until they reach maturity.





# THE GROWOUT

A person's hands are shown holding a sturgeon fish over a body of water. The fish is held horizontally, with its head to the right and tail to the left. The person's left hand is near the head, and their right hand is near the tail. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt.

**It takes a lot of patience, knowledge and determination to develop a sturgeon aquaculture business. In average, from egg to egg, 10 years are needed to produce high quality caviar and sturgeon meat! If you try to speed up the process too much you risk to lose quality... Good things take time, passion and resources! Sturgeon are kept in clean water, feed high quality feed and monitored continuously to ensure a clean and efficient production process.**

A fisherman wearing a dark cap and a red apron is silhouetted against a bright sunset sky. He is leaning over the side of a boat, handling a fishing net. The background shows a calm body of water and distant land under a hazy, golden light.

# THE HARVEST

Sturgeon are caught using traditional fishing methods used for over 100 years on the Saint John River. The fishery only uses 9 nets each a maximum of 60 meters long. These nets are strategically spread out along the river, not too far from the processing plant and farm location. The nets are made of 13 to 16-inch mesh and are checked daily during the May, July and August fishing seasons, yielding no by-catch.

## Acadian Sturgeon makes sure the harvest is sustainable.

They measure, tag and release about 30% of the total catch for doing a stock assessment study and maximizing the use of this renewable resource. Sturgeon in other parts of the world were placed on the endangered species list, however in Eastern Canada, due to sustainable fishing practices, the population is actually increasing.

The nets are hauled up by hand, the sturgeon are removed and kept alive in the boat to determine the sex and maturity stage of each fish. Cornel, along with local fishermen, harvest a quota of maximum 350 adult Atlantic sturgeon a year (175 females and 175 males) ranging in size from 6 to 9 feet each.



Females that are spent or immature for caviar are released immediately back into the water as they would be of more value when they are full of eggs. The same is for smaller males (4-5 feet) as they will grow for a few more years. A portion of the fish caught each season have an ultrasonic tag surgically implanted. These tags assist in collecting data for research purposes and to help determine the sturgeons' migration pattern over time. Every fish is checked for ultrasonic tags, and when they are detected, the fish is released back into the water to continue the tracking process.

Even with their lengthy lifespan, being bottom feeders and eating small prey such as worms, shrimp and mollusks, they do not accumulate mercury and heavy metals like other large fish. They are laboratory tested every year by regulatory agencies.

# THE PROCESS

Acadian Sturgeon will not harvest a fish unless it is in perfect condition. Once it reaches the processing plant, the tail is removed and the fish is bled out. The fish that are kept are harvested mainly for caviar and meat, however, all of the by-products and skin are sold in true nose-to-tail style.



**Sturgeon do not have any bones, only scutes located on the skin.**

When the skin is not manually removed in full for tanning and display, the body is cut into 1-foot pieces that are processed into loins and belly meat which is then vacuum packaged and blast frozen.

The skin and cartilage is removed by hand and the rest of the meat is trimmed using a wizard trimmer electric knife. The belly meat is trimmed to make each piece more uniform. The bone marrow is extracted by snapping the backbone and manually pulling it out.



**The internal organs such as the gas bladder, bone marrow, cartilage and tripe are all harvested and sold.**

The orange lines that run throughout the flesh is a healthy fat, full of carotene. The red meat, on the loin located close to the skin, is removed and sold as grind meat. While the white meat (loin & belly) is very mild in flavour, the red meat is slightly fishier.



# NO GUTS, ALL GLORY

There is no waste when it comes to sturgeon meat. Once the loins and belly have been portioned, any remaining tail meat and trim is ground and sold. The texture is firm and succulent, lending itself well to a variety of cooking methods.

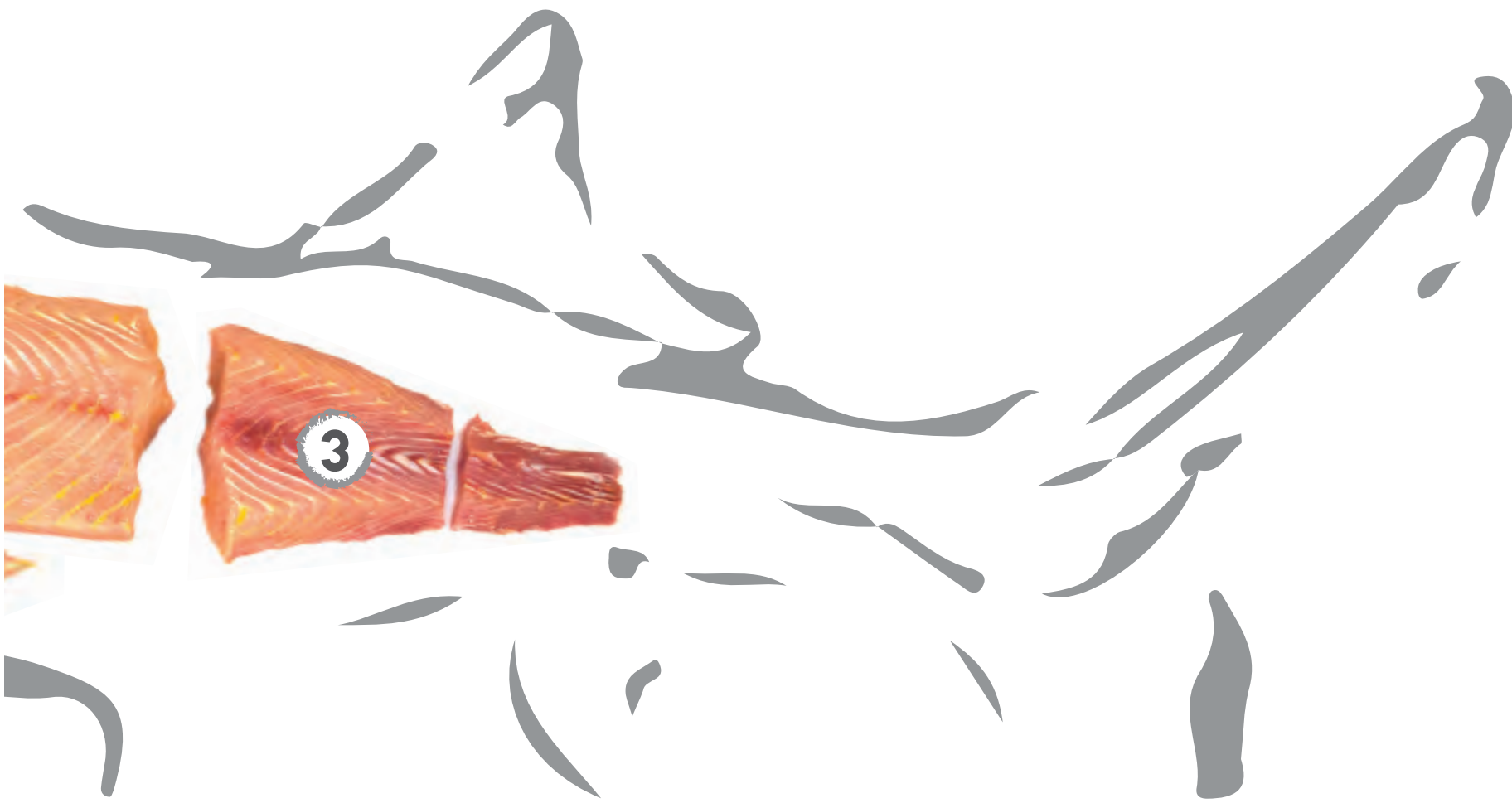


## ① LOIN

There are two loins on a sturgeon fish and are at least 5 feet long. Because the fish is so long, the loin is cut into 3-5 sections each weighing 1-3 kilograms.

## ② BELLY

The belly meat is not like the loins, it is also very lean, but slightly more tender.



e salmon belly. It is very similar to the loin and  
/ more fibrous and not as uniformly shaped.

### ③ TAIL

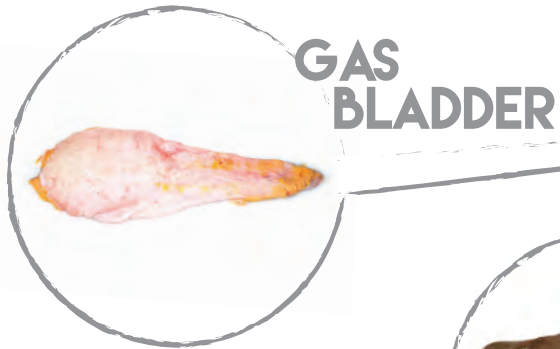
Just like the belly, the tail is not uniformly shaped. It contains most of the red swimming muscles.



**HEAD**



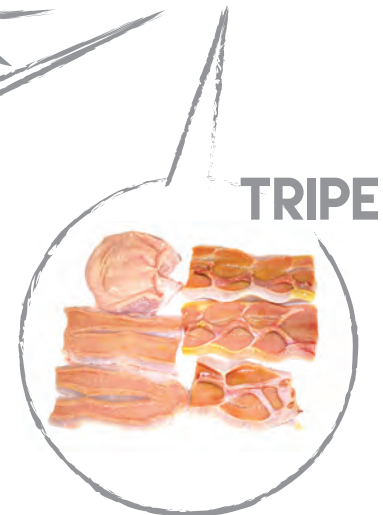
**BONE  
MARRON**



**GAS  
BLADDER**



**LIVER**



**TRIPE**



# NOSE-TO-TAIL

Acadian Sturgeon truly believes in nose-to-tail utilization. Each part of the sturgeon is available for purchase. There are a variety of recipes for each product and the list continues to grow as chefs work with them and incorporate them into their menus.



SKIN/FINS



EGGS



GONADS





# THE GOODS

Sturgeon is a fish loved by everybody, even people who do not like fish. It has a meaty texture and a very fresh flavour. In the 1900's, it was known as Albany beef in New York.

# THE EGGS

Currently Acadian Sturgeon produces up to **500 kilograms** of caviar per year. Once their aquaculture program is running at full capacity, annually, the goal is to sustainably produce up to **10 tons of high quality caviar in a land-based system** that mimics nature. The caviar is never frozen and is produced using the Malassol (low salt) technique.

Traditionally caviar was tasted on the back of your hand. By tilting your hand, you can see the reflection off the caviar. When serving, choose a spoon made of Mother of Pearl, horn, wood or plastic. The caviar is delicate, reacting with any metals and altering the flavour.

“ **Caviar is an experience. It is not an acquired taste, it is an educated taste. You want to eat it in the right atmosphere, to share it with the people you love and respect, to celebrate and cherish the gourmet experience.** ”

Caviar pairs very well with a dry champagne, vodka or white wine. The acidity helps to cleanse the palate in between bites. It's not just a garnish; you should have at least **2 grams per taste** to actually feel the eggs. It is a pleasant, buttery taste that stays on your tongue. As the caviar ages it also develops more flavour.

## HOW TO EAT CAVIAR

“CHAMPAGNE, CAVIAR, CHAMPAGNE, CAVIAR, REPEAT.”

1. CLEANSE PALATE WITH CHAMPAGNE OR WATER.
2. PUT CAVIAR ONTO YOUR TONGUE AND HOLD IT THERE FEEL THE EGGS AND SLOWLY CRUSH THEM; LET THE FLAVOUR DEVELOP.
3. CLEANSE PALATE WITH CHAMPAGNE OR WATER.
4. REPEAT.





# THE TRIO OF ACADIAN CAVIAR

Experiencing sturgeon caviar cannot be better than comparing the 3 Acadian caviars side by side!



**ACADIAN WILD:** The only sustainable wild caviar in the world, from Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*)! Harvested in a small, traditional and strictly regulated fishery on St. John River. Fully marine species, adults live in the Bay of Fundy. Grain size similar to sevruga (1.8-2.4 mm), melting in the mouth texture and pleasant umami taste (buttery, nutty, rich)

**ACADIAN GOLD:** Produced from a rare genetic variety of shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)! Only about 20% of our caviar production from this species is the gold variety! Grown inland in flow through and water reuse systems. Sturgeon take 6-9 years to mature. Grain size similar to ossetra (2.5-2.8 mm), medium firm texture and mild taste (buttery, sea salt, nutty)



**ACADIAN GREEN:** Produced from shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) in environmentally responsible landbased flow through and water reuse systems. Shortnose sturgeon takes 6-9 years to mature. Grain size similar to ossetra (2.5-3.0 mm), greenish with amber reflections and mild taste (buttery, seaweed, creamy)





# THE MEAT

## SMOKED

Smoked sturgeon is almost like bacon; it's not dry and flaky like other hot smoked fish. The texture is fibrous, more like chicken or turkey. It is brined for approximately 8 hours in a brown sugar & salt mixture and then smoked using maple chips. The flesh is meaty but the smoke is delicate creating a moist product. It is a very versatile product that can be eaten on its own or used in dishes such as in seafood chowder or pastas. It freezes very well and the freezing/thawing process does not change the texture.

## PATE

The pate is made up of smoked sturgeon, cream cheese and a special blend of herbs and spices. It freezes very well and can be served warm or cold. Sturgeon pate goes well with fresh bread, crackers, vegetables or seaweed snacks.

## FRESH MEAT

Sturgeon meat can be used in a variety of formats, from raw in sashimi, ceviche, carpaccio or tartare to seared or grilled medium-rare or even braised in the oven. Unlike most fish, it has a dense texture almost like pork. The loin works great for steaks and the belly meat is nice cubed up for skewers, soup or ground. There are numerous possibilities when cooking with sturgeon.

## OFFAL

Every part of the sturgeon is used from the bone marrow to the cartilage, tripe and even the gas bladder. We even dry and mount the skin for decoration. Acadian Sturgeon is a firm believer in using every part of the fish so nothing is wasted.



# THE PRODUCTS



## Caviar

Fresh flavour using Malassol technique - never frozen  
Great for appetizers, garnishes or even dessert (caviar sabayon)  
A special food for special occasions

**30 g (2-6 people)**  
**50 g (2-10 people)**  
**125 g (6-24 people)**  
**250 g, 500 g, 1 kg, 1.8 kg**

## Smoked Sturgeon

Moist-meaty texture, lightly smoked with maple chips  
Great served cold for appetizers, sandwiches or hot in pastas and chowders

**Un sliced Loin: 400 g-1 kg**  
**Sliced Loin: 100 g or 335 g**



## Smoked Sturgeon Pâté

Keep frozen until ready to consume - Shelf life of 1 year  
Thaw in the refrigerator and serve cold or slightly warmed in the microwave  
Perfect for appetizers with freshly toasted crostinis or crackers

**200 g container**

# THE CUTS



## Loin

Meaty texture and fresh flavour  
Great for searing, grilling, simmering & braising  
Skin & cartilage removed - no red muscle  
**1-3 kg/pkg**



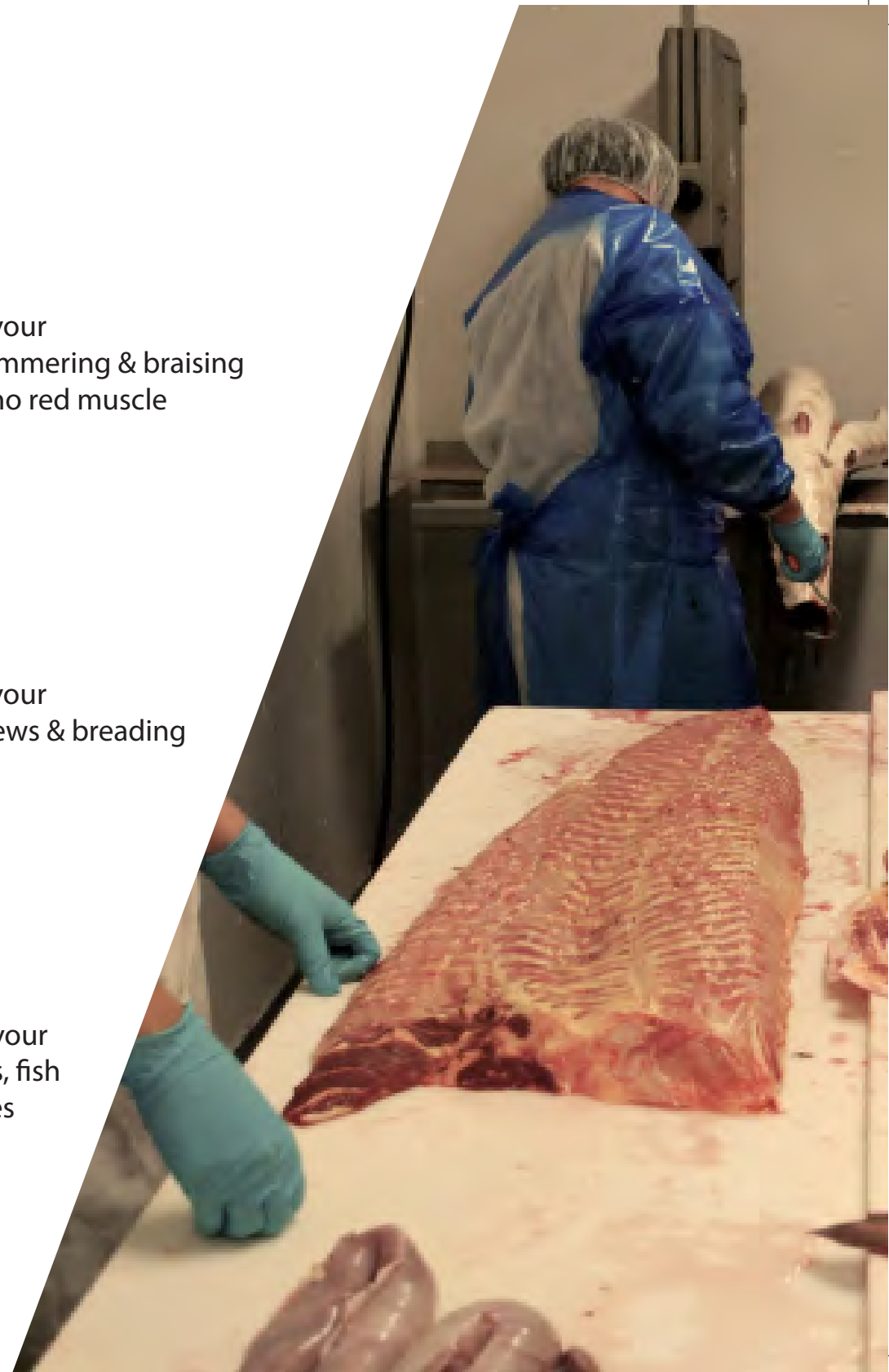
## Belly Meat

Meaty texture and fresh flavour  
Great for skewers, soups, stews & breading  
Skin on - no red muscle  
**2-3 kg/pkg**



## Grind Meat

Meaty texture and fresh flavour  
Great for meatballs, burgers, fish cakes, tartare or meat sauces  
Mix of red & white meat  
**1 kg or 2.5 kg**





# THE OFF-CUTS



## Fins

Great for adding texture and flavour to soups & stocks  
Sustainable sturgeon fins can be used in place of shark fins

**1-2 kg**



## Bone Marrow (Whole)

This bone marrow is removed whole. When the sturgeon is skinned for tanning, the back bone is broken down by hand and the bone marrow is skillfully removed

Great for soups, ceviche or roasting

**1-2 kg**



## Cartilage & Bone Marrow (Pieces)

Portioned and ready to use

Great for bouillabaisse or chowders

**1-2 kg**



# THE PLATE

“There is room for creativity as long as you know the basics.” Sturgeon should be cooked a little, such as a quick sear or grilled medium-rare, or cooked a lot by braising or simmering in a soup. It’s fibrous texture allows it to hold its shape and not break up during the cooking process.



## DORINA'S BOUILLABAISE

Yield: 8 L

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 6 L      | Water   |
| 1 kg     | Acadian Sturgeon cartilage, cut into ½ inch pieces  |
| 2 kg     | Acadian Sturgeon belly meat, cut into ½ inch pieces |
| 1 large  | Onion, peeled & chopped                             |
| ½ kg     | Carrots, peeled & chopped                           |
| ½ kg     | Parsnip, peeled & chopped                           |
| ¼ kg     | Celery root, peeled & chopped                       |
| ½ kg     | Peeled tomatoes                                     |
| 200 g    | Arborio rice  |
| 1/2 cup  | Sour grape juice or lemon juice                     |
| 2 tbsps  | Dried vegetables (dried soup stock)                 |
| to taste | Salt  |
| 1 tsp    | Black pepper  |
| 2 tbsps  | Olive oil   |
| 1 tbsps  | Dried dill weed                                     |
| 100 g    | Fresh lovage, chopped                               |
| 2 large  | Eggs, whisked                                       |

### Method:

1. In a large stockpot add cartilage; bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 60 minutes.
2. Add the sturgeon belly meat and continue cooking for another 20 minutes.
3. Stir in the onions, carrots, parsnip, celery root, tomatoes, rice and the whisked eggs. Cook over medium heat, uncovered for 15-20 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Add the dried vegetables and season with salt & black pepper. Mix in the dill and lovage. Serve hot.

## CORNEL'S CEVICHE

Yield: 1 kg

|         |                                    |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1 kg    | Acadian Sturgeon belly, small dice |
| ¼ cup   | Lemon juice                        |
| ¼ cup   | Lime juice                         |
| ¼ cup   | Extra virgin olive oil             |
| ¼ cup   | Maple syrup                        |
| ¼ bunch | Fresh chives, chopped              |
| ½ tsp   | Dried basil                        |
| ½ tsp   | Wasabi                             |
| 2 tsp   | Soy sauce                          |
| ¼ tsp   | Crushed red pepper flakes          |
| ½ tsp   | Sea salt                           |
| 2 each  | Shallots, sliced                   |

### Method:

1. Combine lemon juice, lime juice, olive oil, maple syrup, chives, basil, wasabi, soy sauce, red pepper flakes and salt in a bowl and whisk together.
2. Pour marinade over sturgeon meat and gently mix; cover and let rest for 20 minutes in the refrigerator.
3. Fry shallots until crispy and set aside until ready to serve.
4. Garnish ceviche with crispy shallots and serve.

## BLINIS DEMIDOFF WITH ACADIAN CAVIAR

Yield: 6-8 portions

|         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 1 pkg   | Dry yeast                |
| ¼ cup   | Warm water               |
| 2 cups  | Milk, scalded and cooled |
| 1 cup   | Buckwheat flour          |
| 1 cup   | All purpose flour        |
| 1 tsp   | Sugar                    |
| 1 tsp   | Salt                     |
| 4 large | Eggs, separated          |
| 2 cups  | Clarified butter         |
| 500 g   | Acadian Caviar           |
| 2 cups  | Sour cream               |

### *Method:*

1. Combine yeast and warm water in a large bowl and allow yeast to activate; add half of the milk.
2. Combine flours, sugar & salt and fold 1 cup into the yeast mixture. Cover and let rise for ½ hour.
3. Add the remaining milk and flour and mix in the egg yolks. Beat mixture until smooth and allow to rise for one hour or until doubled in size.
4. Add 3 tbsp clarified butter. Whip the egg whites to stiff peaks and fold into the batter; let rise for one hour.
5. Once batter has risen, heat a cast iron skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add 1 tsp of clarified butter and melt.
6. Pour 1 tbsp of batter into the pan for each blini and cook for 1 minute; flip blinis and cook for another minute adding butter as needed.
7. Remove blinis from heat and keep warm; continue this process until all of the blinis are prepared. Place blinis onto a serving platter and top with caviar and sour cream.

## SARA'S STURGEON BURGERS

Yield: 12 burgers

|           |                             |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 1 kg      | Acadian Sturgeon grind meat |
| as needed | Matzo meal                  |
| 2 large   | Eggs                        |
| 1 each    | Green onion, chopped        |
| to taste  | Salt                        |
| 1 tbsp    | Old Bay seasoning           |
| as needed | Olive oil                   |

### *Method:*

1. Preheat grill or fry pan to medium-high heat.
2. In a bowl mix the ground sturgeon, Matzo meal, eggs and green onion.
3. Season with salt and Old Bay.
4. Form meat into twelve patties; cook for 10 minutes or until cooked thoroughly.

## BAKED STURGEON LOINS MARINATED IN MAPLE SYRUP & SAFFRON

Yield: 6-8 portions

|          |                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 kg     | Acadian Sturgeon fillets          |
| 2 cups   | Canola oil, divided               |
| 1 cup    | Maple syrup                       |
| 1 pinch  | Saffron                           |
| to taste | Dried thyme, basil, dill          |
| to taste | Salt & pepper                     |
| 1 each   | Shallot, sliced                   |
| 2 cups   | Brussel sprouts or wild mushrooms |
| 1 pint   | Cherry tomatoes                   |

### *Method:*

1. Place sturgeon fillets into a baking dish.
2. Combine half the canola oil, maple syrup, saffron and spices; pour over sturgeon fillets and marinate for at least 6 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F.
4. Remove sturgeon from marinade and place onto a baking dish. Place the shallots and Brussel sprouts or wild mushrooms around sturgeon fillets.
5. Stir in remaining canola oil and bake for 1 hour.
6. Remove baking dish from oven and stir in cherry tomatoes; continue cooking for an additional 15 minutes. Serve hot with a glass of Riesling or Chardonnay.

## BABYBAKEDPOTATOESWITHACADIAN CAVIAR

Yield: 1 pound

|          |                                    |
|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1 pound  | Baby red or white potatoes, washed |
| ¼ cup    | Unsalted butter, melted            |
| 1 cup    | Organic crème fraiche              |
| 2 tbs    | Chives, finely chopped             |
| ¾ cup    | Olive oil                          |
| 100 g    | Acadian Caviar                     |
| to taste | Black pepper                       |

### *Method:*

1. Place potatoes into a pot and cover with cold water; bring to a boil and simmer for 20 minutes or until potatoes are cooked through.
2. Remove pot from heat, drain and allow to cool then cut each potato in half.
3. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place a piece of aluminum foil onto a baking sheet and brush with melted butter.
4. Arrange the baby potatoes (cut side down) on the baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes or until golden.
5. Mix the crème fraiche, chives and pepper; place the crème fraiche in the fridge.
6. On a serving plate, arrange the baby potatoes (with their cut sides facing up).
7. Add a teaspoon of crème fraiche and garnish with generous dollop of caviar. Serve with a chilled vintage Champagne or vodka.



# FAQ

## ***Where do the sturgeon come from, are they sustainable?***

Our sturgeon comes from the waters of the Saint John River. They spend most of their lives in salt water in the Bay of Fundy, however they travel to the rivers to spawn. In other parts of the world, sturgeon are an endangered species, but in New Brunswick with a strict management system and scientific quotas in place, the population is sustainable and even increasing in recent years!

## ***Do sturgeon have bones?***

No, sturgeon are cartilaginous fish so they do not have a bony skeleton. The only bones they have are “scutes” located on the outside of the skin and cartilage to provide structural support, similar to armour.

## ***What is the shelf life of caviar?***

Caviar can be stored up to 4 weeks under refrigeration. Fresh caviar should be consumed within maximum 3 days after being opened and refrigerated. Un-used caviar should be stored in its own container, covered tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerated in the coldest spot of your refrigerator.

## ***Why is caviar so expensive?***

The saying is true, you get what you pay for and sometimes you can find other eggs or even synthetic products called “caviar” although they are not sturgeon eggs! Real caviar is expensive because it comes only from sturgeon that take over 10 years to become mature. Caviar is a premium, healthy product that is always harvested, mixed and packed by hand. Great care is taken to ensure the eggs are in perfect condition when they reach the consumer for your pure gourmet enjoyment.

## ***What is your preferred way to serve caviar?***

Caviar is best enjoyed off a mother of pearl spoon with a nice glass of Champagne! It also pairs well with blinis (small pancakes), freshly shucked oysters, hard or soft boiled eggs, although the possibilities are endless! We recommend a 4-5 gram serving per person (around 15 grams is better!) so you are able to really enjoy the flavour and melting feel of the eggs on your tongue.

## ***What are the health benefits of eating caviar?***

Caviar is very high in polyunsaturated fats (Omega 3), vitamins A, B 6 & 12, C and minerals (calcium, iron & zinc). It is one of the healthiest gourmet foods.

## ***Do you marinate the meat? What do you use for a marinade?***

Marinating the meat is a common and recommended step in the cooking process to improve texture and infuse flavours. We like to marinate it with a little bit of Canadian Maple Syrup as the sweetness compliments the fish perfectly. Any of your favourite marinating ingredients such as citrus, herbs and garlic will also pair well with the sturgeon.

## ***How do you eat the meat?***

Sturgeon is a very versatile fish! The meat can be eaten raw (sashimi, ceviche, carpaccio or tartare), seared or grilled to medium-rare or braised in the oven. Unlike most fish, it has a dense texture almost like pork. The loin works great on steaks and the belly meat is nice cubed up for skewers, soup or ground.

## ***Is the smoked sturgeon hot smoked or cold smoked?***

Smoked sturgeon is hot smoked using maple chips; the final product is delicately smoked and very moist.

## ***What do you do with the rest of the fish other than the caviar and meat? Is it good?***

Every part of the sturgeon is used from the bone marrow to the cartilage, tripe and even the gas bladder. We even dry and mount the skin for decoration. Acadian Sturgeon is a firm believer in using every part of the fish so nothing is wasted.

## ***How do you cook the by-products?***

Each of the by-products has many uses. A few good examples include the grind meat for meatballs, sliders or sausages, the bone marrow to make a great ceviche, the cartilage for a stock for bouillabaisse

 @KingofCaviar

 Acadian Sturgeon

 @KingofCaviar



This technical handbook was developed in collaboration with  
Canada's Smartest Kitchen.

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