



CAVIAR

Sturgeon caviar is the best. Beluga, ossetra and sevruga are sturgeon caviars. One difference between beluga, ossetra and sevruga is egg size due to the size of the fish, beluga being the largest and sevruga the smallest. Ossetra has an earthy, lemony, nutty flavor. The texture and color varies with the age of the fish. These three sturgeon caviars are stand-alone and need no accompaniment.

Serve fine caviars with great simplicity in order to taste the caviar itself. Use a sweet French bread (not sourdough which overpowers the flavor) lightly toasted on one side (so as not to overpower the texture). Pair with ice-cold vodka, champagne or dry white wine. Caviar may be served with lemon, chopped egg, parsley, onion, chives or sour cream. Metal utensils make caviar taste metallic because there is a chemical reaction between the eggs and the metal. Use mother of pearl, natural horn, glass, etc. for serving. These fine caviars are frequently served with blinis, a light and puffy French pancake, served with crème fraiche.

Golden whitefish caviar, or golden caviar, has a crisp tobiko-like crunchy texture, and a sweet, bland to light, fruity flavor. The eggs are tiny and best used in pastas, soups and salads. Golden whitefish caviar can be used as a garnish on canapés and toast points. It is also good in caviar pies. Tobiko is flying fish roe from the Pacific and is used as a garnish for sushi or sashimi. The tiny eggs have little flavor, a crunchy texture and a very pretty color. Colors are orange, red, black and a fiery green like wasabi. Salmon roe or Keta is a caviar substitute from Pacific salmon with a mild, tangy, salmon flavor. It is best served with pastas, soups and salads. Salmon roe makes a beautiful accent in hors d'oeuvres.

HANDLING AND QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Caviar must, above all, be protected from the air. Exposure immediately leads to oxidation. The contents of a tin or jar that has been opened several times can be reduced to a soft, oily mass in less than an hour. Caviar should be stored at 28 degrees Fahrenheit; the light salt (malossol) prevents freezing. Golden caviar freezes well. Plastic containers can often crack in the freezer. When milky on the bottom, eggs are breaking down. Any liquid should be clear.

UNCOOKED FOIE GRAS

Foie gras is the engorged liver of the duck or goose. Uncooked foie gras is sold whole only. Partial packages are not available. It is extremely rich and creamy with 85% fat content. When cooked, the remaining fat can be used to make outstanding sauces. It is sold as grade A (the richest and creamiest texture), grade B and grade C. Grade A foie gras typically weighs slightly more than 1½ pounds. Grade B slightly more than 1 lb. Grade C has some imperfections and some trimming may be required. It is good for pates when one does not need whole livers. Foie gras is expensive because demand greatly exceeds supply and because it is labor intensive to produce. Pate de foie gras is made from foie gras blended with pork and pork fat. Armagnac brandy is sometimes added.

PREPARATION

To prepare livers, cut out and pull out blood vessels with a Xacto or surgical knife. Soak in lightly salted milk for 3 hours to remove impurities. Make terrine using crock just the right size and slow cook; or slice, lightly flour, and sauté about 35-45 seconds per side. Deglaze pan, use for first course. Once opened, foie gras is fresh for about 5 days. Please order one week in advance.