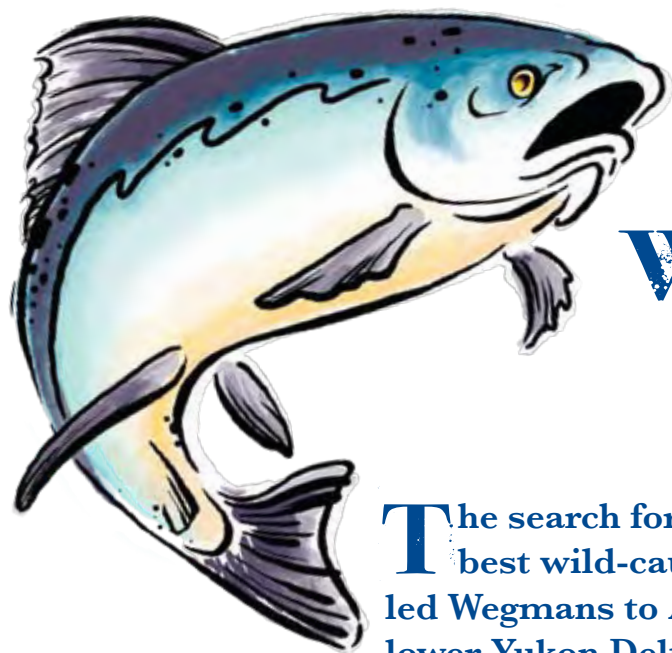




 a taste of **WILD**  
**ALASKA**



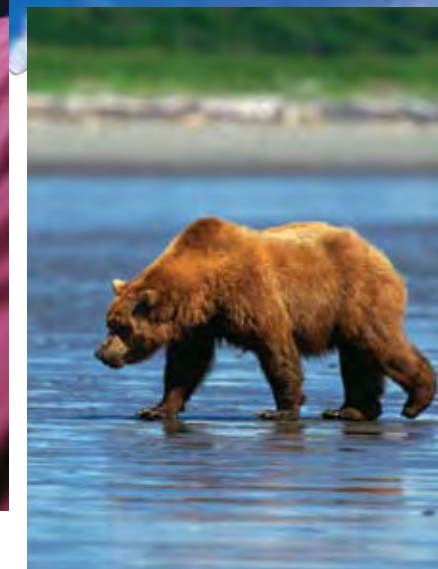
# WILD-CAUGHT SALMON

**The search for the world's best wild-caught salmon led Wegmans to Alaska's lower Yukon Delta, a rugged place where native families use small boats to net wild salmon—just as they've done for thousands of years.**

Since 1994, Wegmans has offered seafood lovers the best sustainably harvested Alaskan salmon. Much of that bounty comes from the Copper River, a 300-mile waterway renowned for its King, Coho, and Sockeye. During the run from mid-May to mid-June, this is the salmon you'll want on your grill—it's the best of the early-season wild Alaska salmon.

There's also a less famous—though much longer—river due north that's getting more attention from salmon fans these days. Cutting a horizontal path through the 49th state, the Yukon River hosts a staggering 2,000-mile salmon run—a distance, it's said, that takes Alaska's wild salmon to another level on the flavor scale from mid-June right through August.

To survive the arduous journey up the United States' second longest river, the salmon must build up a hefty reserve of fat. And this fat reserve is why fish lovers wait all year for this salmon. "Yukon River salmon develop a huge layer of fat, which contributes to their wonderful, one-of-a-kind taste," says Carl Salamone, Wegmans Vice President of Seafood Operations.



Yukon River salmon truly is unique, with a rich, sweet-salty taste that reflects the river's mineral tones, a beautiful texture, and a bright orange-red color. That flavor and impressive health benefits come courtesy of a high level of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids—this oil coats and crisps the meat as it cooks. Compared with other salmon, Yukon River varieties can boast anywhere from 10 to 25 percent more oil.

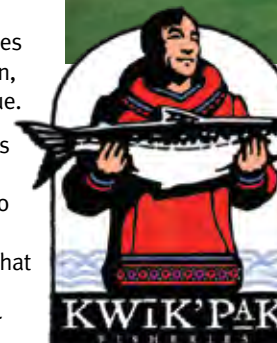
## Sustaining a people and way of life

To provide wild-caught Yukon River salmon that meets Wegmans' exacting standards, our Seafood team has partnered with Kwik'pak Fisheries, a native Alaskan buyer and processor of this exceptional salmon. For the fifth straight year, Wegmans will be offering the company's Yukon River salmon. The harvest traditionally includes King, a succulent, top-of-the-line salmon, and Keta, an excellent, full-flavored value.

Yet it was more than Kwik'pak's harvests that won over Wegmans—it was also how this company brought their catch to market. Kwik'pak Fisheries is a socially and environmentally driven enterprise that helps sustain a people and a way of life that's been unfolding in the Yukon River Delta for over 10,000 years.



# SUSTAINABLE



*Opposite: Yupik families work together to net salmon during the summer run. Carl Salamone, Wegmans VP of Seafood Operations. Above: The ulu is a traditional tool used by the Yupiks to prepare their fresh catch. Grizzlies provide competition for the Yukon River Delta's salmon.*

# “IT REALLY IS A FAMILY AFFAIR”



## Family businesses working together

The Yupik (the name means “real people”) are a group of Eskimos who have inhabited this northern Alaskan area (comparable in size to Oregon) since their ancestors crossed a land bridge from Siberia thousands of years ago. Since then, they’ve been dependent on salmon for subsistence fishing and, later, for commercial fishing.

The latter operation worked well for many decades, with planes regularly flying thousands of pounds of salmon from the tiny villages dotting this desolate landscape. Then—for reasons still unknown—the salmon didn’t return in large numbers between 1999 and 2001. The drought threw hundreds of Yupik fishermen out of work.

Thankfully, the fish returned in 2002, the same year Copper River salmon started commanding top-dollar prices. It was time for the Yukon River fishermen to get back in the game. Six native Alaskan villages now work together as the Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association, a



nonprofit from which Kwik’pak Fisheries emerged as a subsidiary.

Marti Bickford, who assists Kwik’pak on sales, says the company isn’t so much a single business as much as a bunch of family businesses working together. “You’ll see a husband, wife, and older children working side-by-side,” she says. “It really is a family affair.” Virtually all of the fishermen working for Kwik’pak are Yupik, who Marti describes as “truly ‘real people’—they’re gentle, humble, and proud of what they do.”

## Shared values

Like Wegmans, Kwik’pak goes above and beyond to source the best responsibly harvested food. Industrial fishing this is not. The Yupiks set off in small skiffs to net their catches by hand. This small-scale approach, along with the Yupiks’ reverence for the icy Yukon River and the fact that Alaska is the only state with conservation laws written into its constitution, led the Marine Stewardship Council to recognize the company as a sustainable business. It also granted Kwik’pak membership in the Fair Trade Federation. “In part due to this, Wegmans was one of the first companies to have Kwik’pak procure salmon for its customers,” says Carl.

Besides Kwik’pak’s high-quality offerings and environmentally friendly practices, Carl was also impressed with “how they help native Alaskans.” By employing the lion’s share of the families in the lower river communities like Emmonak, a village of just 800, Kwik’pak helps the Yupiks keep fishing and living on their native land.



**FRESH**  
Facing page: The Yupik people’s culture centers on the salmon harvest. Family is a priority: they work and celebrate together. This page: fresh catches are quickly processed and direct-shipped to Wegmans—ready for recipes.



## From river to plate in just 48 to 60 hours

Kwik’pak processes and packages their catch fast. Very fast, in fact.

The steps it takes to deliver fish from the Yukon River to a Wegmans store start with the day’s bounty being pulled from the icy waters of the Yukon. It is then air shipped to Rochester, New York where it is processed then rushed to our stores. All this in less than 60 hours. The fast turnaround ensures that the Yukon River salmon—which is only in season from

mid-June until August—is sold at the peak of freshness.

Whether you opt for King, Keta, or another of Wegmans wild-caught varieties, preparing salmon is easy. Carl recommends cedar-plank grilling (see recipe on page 29), or pan-searing fillets and topping them with a Wegmans Finishing Sauce. Marti likes to sprinkle her salmon with sea salt, pepper, and olive oil before grilling it. “And,” she adds, “a nice white wine like sauvignon blanc or a dry chardonnay pairs nicely with salmon.”

In the end, it doesn’t take much to make Yukon River salmon taste great. But perhaps knowing about their journey and the efforts of Yupik families will help you appreciate that buttery, savory taste even more.

## Get the season’s best wild Alaska salmon

All summer long, different salmon runs mean unique flavor experiences for you. Wegmans wild-caught salmon season starts in the late spring when Copper River catches arrive. Yukon River salmon follow; their run starts in mid-June. Floods, overfishing, and changing ocean conditions can all affect a salmon run. By sourcing wild-caught salmon from more than one location, Wegmans is ready in case one river has an off-year. And no matter the source, Wegmans (which Greenpeace recently placed in the highest category for supermarket seafood sustainability) ensures every fish is responsibly harvested.

