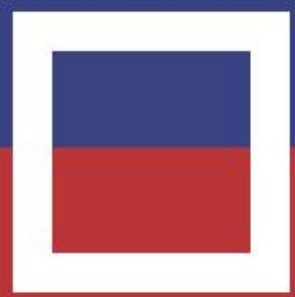




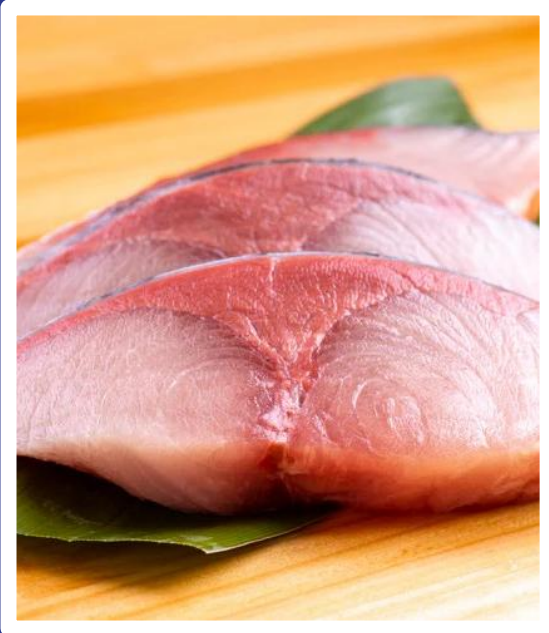
# INGREDIENT OF THE MONTH



American Culinary Federation  
Education Foundation

# ALL ABOUT AMBERJACK

Amberjack is the common name for several large marine fish in the genus *Seriola*, most notably the greater amberjack or *Seriola dumerili*. Records of amberjack fishing date back centuries, with Mediterranean communities referencing similar species in local fish markets as early as the Middle Ages. In Japan, where amberjack is closely related to the species known as kampachi and hamachi, cultivation and seasonal capture have been part of traditional fisheries for generations.



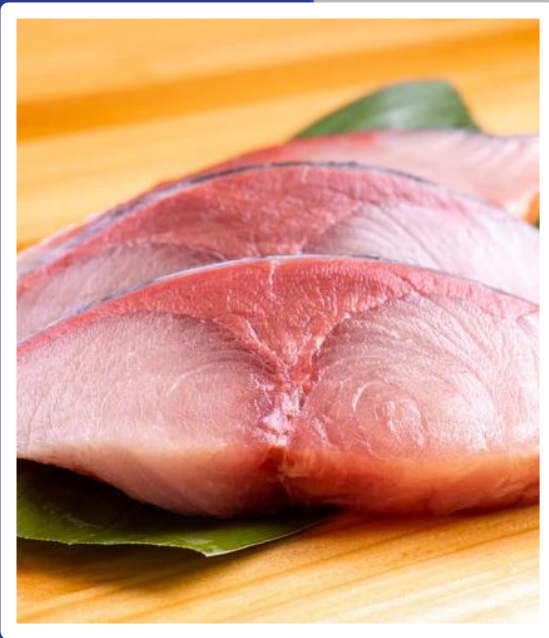
In many coastal cultures, amberjack is more than a commercial catch, it's a part of local maritime identity. In the southeastern US and the Caribbean, amberjack is a sought-after trophy fish for recreational anglers, known for its powerful fight when hooked. In Mediterranean fishing towns, it is tied to traditional market days and seasonal celebrations marking the arrival of larger fish offshore. In Japan, the seasonal harvest of related kampachi has cultural significance, appearing in traditional dishes during specific festivals and gatherings.

While the fish is found in warm and temperate waters worldwide, it has deep historical roots in coastal fishing cultures of the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific. Amberjack inhabits offshore waters, typically around reefs, wrecks, and rocky outcrops at depths ranging from 60 to over 200 feet. Their preference for deep, warm, clear waters has made them a targeted species for both commercial and sport fishing.

Commercial harvesting of amberjack is carried out using hook-and-line, handlines, and longlines, with some fisheries also using traps or nets in specific regions. These methods are often chosen to preserve quality, as amberjack is a firm-fleshed fish prized for freshness. Amberjack is a valuable commodity in both domestic and export markets. Fresh-caught fish are typically landed whole and processed locally or shipped on ice to wholesale markets. In Japan, farm-raised amberjack is a significant aquaculture product, particularly during the colder months when wild stocks are more limited.

# HEALTHY INGREDIENT CONTRIBUTION

Amberjack is an excellent source of lean protein, omega-3s, and B vitamins, particularly B12 and niacin, while also delivering high selenium and a useful boost of vitamin D. It supports heart health, brain function, immunity, and bone strength while covering a significant share of daily nutritional needs.



## **Protein: ~19 g (38% DV)**

- Essential for building and repairing muscles, tissues, enzymes, and hormones.

## **Fat: ~5 g (6% DV)**

- Provides energy, helps absorb fat-soluble vitamins.

## **Omega-3 Fatty Acids: ~0.8 g (50–60% DV)**

- Reduce inflammation, support brain function, improve heart and vascular health, may reduce risk of chronic disease.

## **Niacin (B3): ~7 mg (45% DV)**

- Aids energy metabolism, nervous system function, and skin health.

## **Vitamin B12: ~3.5 mcg (145% DV)**

- Supports red blood cell formation, neurological function, and DNA synthesis.

## **Vitamin A: ~40 mcg (4% DV)**

- Supports vision, immune health, and skin integrity.

## **Vitamin D: ~6 mcg (30% DV)**

- Supports bone health through calcium absorption and helps muscle performance.

## **Selenium: ~50 mcg (90% DV)**

- Antioxidant mineral that protects against cell damage from free radicals and supports thyroid function.

## **Phosphorus: ~200 mg (15% DV)**

- Supports healthy bones, teeth, and energy production.

## **Magnesium: ~30 mg (8% DV)**

- Supports muscle and nerve function, energy production, and blood pressure regulation.

*Nutritional Information/Values from [USDA FoodData Central](#)*

# TYPES AND VARIETIES

Amberjack is a common name used for several species of fish in the genus *Seriola*, prized for their firm, flavorful flesh and popularity in both recreational fishing and cuisine. While often grouped together, different amberjacks vary in size, distribution, and taste.

## Greater Amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*):

- The largest of the amberjack family, often exceeding 70 inches and 100 pounds.
- Found in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Mediterranean Sea. Prefers deep offshore waters near reefs and shipwrecks.

## Lesser Amberjack (*Seriola fasciata*):

- Much smaller than the greater amberjack, averaging 10–20 inches. Large eyes and a proportionally deeper body.
- Found in deeper waters of the western Atlantic, from Massachusetts to Brazil, often at 200–400 feet.

## Almaco Jack (*Seriola rivoliana*):

- Stockier build than the greater amberjack with longer dorsal and anal fins. Typically grows 20–40 pounds but can reach over 100 pounds.
- Found in tropical and subtropical waters worldwide, especially around offshore structures and reefs.

## Banded Rudderfish (*Seriola zonata*):

- Smallest of the group, usually under 10 pounds. Juveniles have distinct vertical bands and elongated dorsal/anal fins.
- Found along the western Atlantic coast, often near floating debris or jellyfish when young.

## Yellowtail (*Seriola quinqueradiata*):

- Medium to large, usually 10–40 pounds. Sleek body with a distinct yellow stripe along the flanks.
- Native to the northwest Pacific, especially Japan, Korea, and China.

## Greater Amberjack

- Firm, meaty flesh with bold flavor

## Lesser Amberjack

- Similar firm texture but with milder flavor

## Almaco Jack (*Kampachi*)

- Darker flesh, more tender, and richer in flavor

## Banded Rudderfish

- Primarily fished for sport but has edible, mild flesh

## Yellowtail (*Japanese Amberjack / Hamachi / Buri*)

- Flesh has a rich, buttery texture and mild, sweet flavor



# SELECTING AND STORING

When buying fresh amberjack, whether whole or filleted, look for the same quality cues you'd use for other premium fish:

## Selecting Amberjack:

### Appearance—Whole Fish:

- Clear, bright eyes, not cloudy or sunken
- Shiny, metallic skin with a fresh, moist look
- Firm flesh that springs back when pressed
- Gills should be bright red or pink, never brownish

### Appearance—Fillets/Steaks:

- Translucent, firm flesh with a moist sheen
- Color ranges from pinkish to pale ivory
- Avoid gray or dry patches
- No browning or gaping between muscle segments

### Aroma:

- Clean smell like the ocean, never fishy, or ammonia-like

### Source:

- Choose reputable fishmongers or trusted suppliers
- Farmed kampachi and hamachi are consistent options
- Handle and freeze properly to reduce parasite risk

## Storing Amberjack:

### Refrigeration:

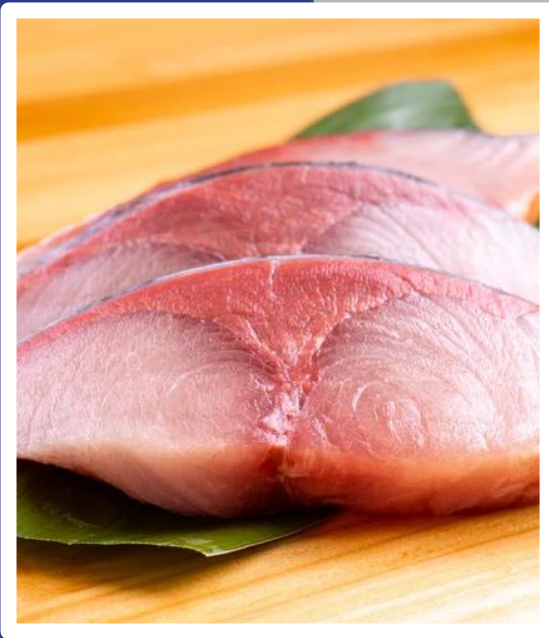
- Store at 32–34°F (0–1°C)
- Ideally should be packed in crushed ice or on a draining tray
- Amberjack spoils quickly if not stored properly
- Use within 1–2 days for best quality

### Freezing:

- Wrap fillets tightly in moisture-proof paper or vacuum-seal
- Freeze at 0°F (-18°C) or lower
- For best taste and texture, use within 2–3 months
- Label with date to track freshness

### Thawing:

- Defrost slowly in the refrigerator
- Never defrost at room temperature.
- For quick use, place vacuum-sealed portions in cold water
- Cook immediately after thawing, never refreeze raw fish



# CULINARY USES

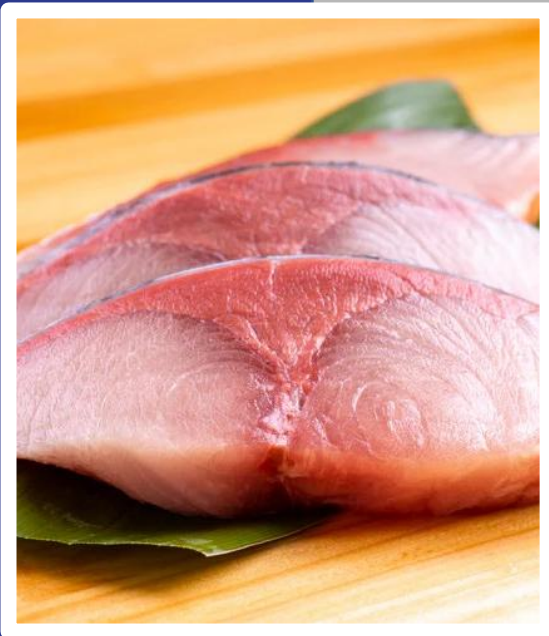
With its firm, versatile flesh, amberjack excels in both raw and cooked preparations. Its rich yet delicate flavor harmonizes beautifully with a wide array of seasonings, sauces, and cultural preparations.

## Raw Preparations:

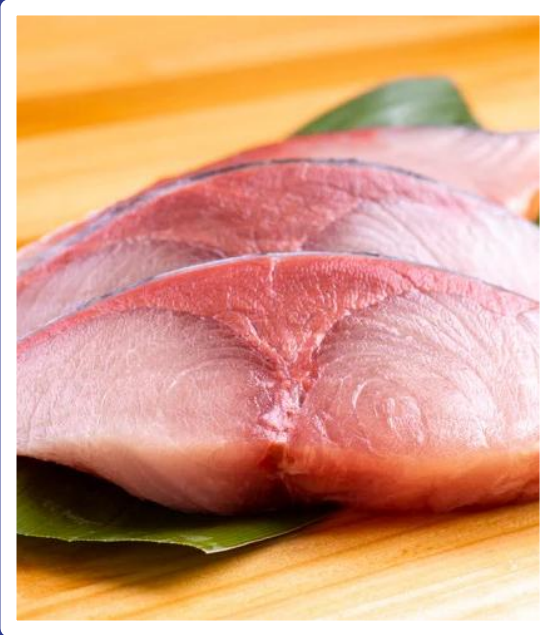
- **Sushi & Sashimi** – Amberjack is a favorite because of its buttery, slightly sweet flavor and clean texture.
- **Ceviche/Tiradito** – Its firm flesh holds up well when marinated in citrus juices, making it perfect for ceviche or tiradito.
- **Carpaccio/Crudo** – Thinly sliced amberjack drizzled with citrus or olive oil, herbs, and spices is a delicate appetizer.
- **Tartar** – Its firm, meaty texture is ideal for tartare preparations, combined with citrus, avocado, or spices.
- **Cured or Pickled** – Can be lightly cured with salt, sugar, and herbs, or thinly sliced and paired with pickled vegetables.

## Cooked Preparations:

- **Grilling** – Amberjack steaks or fillets can be grilled over high heat. Its firm texture keeps the flesh from flaking apart.
- **Pan-Seared or Sautéed** – Quick searing brings out a slightly nutty flavor while keeping the interior moist and tender.
- **Fried Cutlets** – Breaded amberjack fillets can be deep-fried for sandwiches or fish platters.
- **Broiling** – Works well with high, direct heat for a crisped exterior.
- **Baking** – Can be baked with Mediterranean-style seasonings, citrus, or miso glazes.
- **Smoking** – Amberjack's rich, oily flesh absorbs smoke flavors beautifully, ideal for smoked fillets or as part of a platter.
- **Fish Stews & Soups** – Holds up in hearty seafood soups, bouillabaisse, and traditional fish stews without disintegrating.
- **Asian-Style Curries** – Its meat absorbs bold flavors, pairing well with coconut milk, chili, and ginger.
- **Mediterranean Stews** – Amberjack chunks simmer nicely with tomato, saffron, fennel, and potatoes.



# INTERESTING FACTS



- Amberjack tournaments draw anglers from all over, contributing millions to local economies through tourism, charters, and gear sales
- Japan dominates trade in both farming/consumption with amberjack being one of the country's "big three" aquaculture fish alongside tuna and eel
- Farmed amberjack has a tightly integrated supply chain with the fresh catch often reaching overseas restaurants within 48 hours
- Despite their size, amberjack are lightning-fast swimmers darting through reefs, wrecks, and open water
- In just 2–3 years, an amberjack can reach 30 pounds, which is part of why they're both a sustainable and exciting catch
- The biggest amberjack ever caught tipped the scales at over 160 pounds
- The name hamachi alone is enough to sell plates at a premium, making amberjack a strong brand in the seafood world
- Today, farm-raised hamachi is a billion-dollar industry that helps meet year-round demand for sushi and sashimi
- Global demand for amberjack is projected to rise significantly, with the aquaculture market alone expected to grow at over 5% annually

# RECIPE

## Hamachi Crudo

Yield: 2 Servings

### Ingredients:

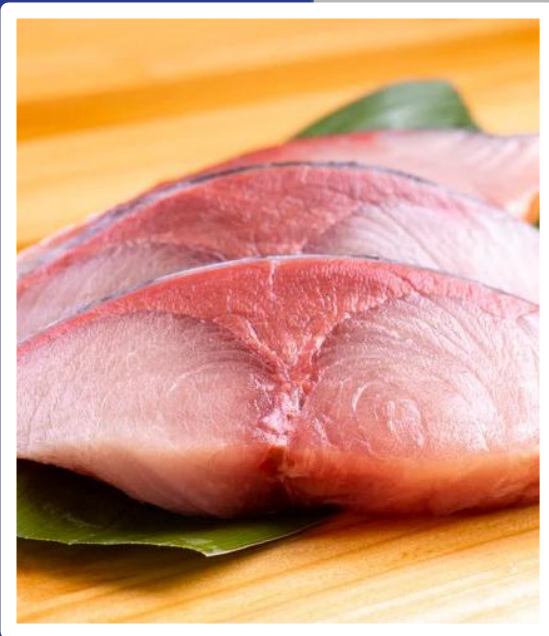
- 1 Shallot, Finely Sliced
- ¼ Cup Rice Wine Vinegar
- ½ Cup Water, Hot
- 3 Tbsp + 2 Tsp Granulated Sugar
- 1 Tsp Kosher Salt
- ½ Lb Hamachi, Sushi Grade
- 2 Tbsp Yuzu Juice
- ½ Tbsp Soy Sauce
- 1 Tbsp Ponzu Sauce
- 2 Tsp Granulated Sugar
- 1 Tsp Toasted Sesame Oil
- 1 Clove Garlic, Grated

### For Garnish:

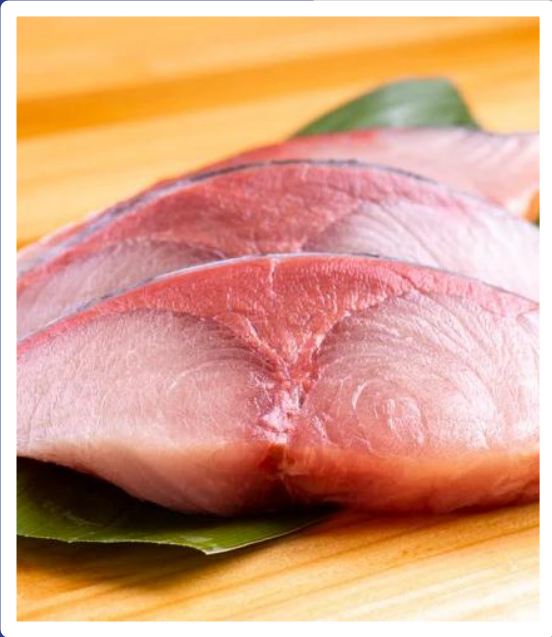
- Flaky Sea Salt
- Serrano Pepper, Thinly Sliced
- Cilantro Leaves

### Directions:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the rice vinegar, hot water, three tablespoons sugar, and the salt. Stir until the sugar and salt are fully dissolved.
2. Transfer the mixture to a jar and add the thinly sliced shallots, pressing them down so they are fully submerged. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Using a sharp knife, slice the hamachi into ¼-inch-thick pieces.
4. Arrange the slices in a single layer on a serving plate.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together the yuzu juice, soy sauce, ponzu, two teaspoons sugar, sesame seeds, and grated garlic until well combined.
6. Drizzle the dressing over the hamachi, sprinkle with flaky sea salt, and garnish with serrano pepper slices and fresh cilantro.
7. Serve the crudo immediately for optimal freshness.



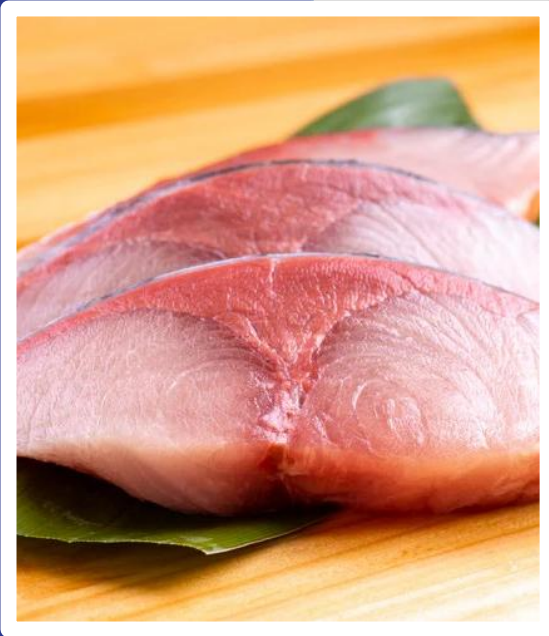
# QUIZ



After you read through this month's Ingredient of the Month, take this quiz to test your knowledge. In order to earn continuing education hours (CEHs) from the American Culinary Federation (ACF), the test must be completed through the ACF's Online Learning Center. Seventy-five percent accuracy is required to earn one hour of continuing education credits toward professional certification.

# QUIZ

## Question #1

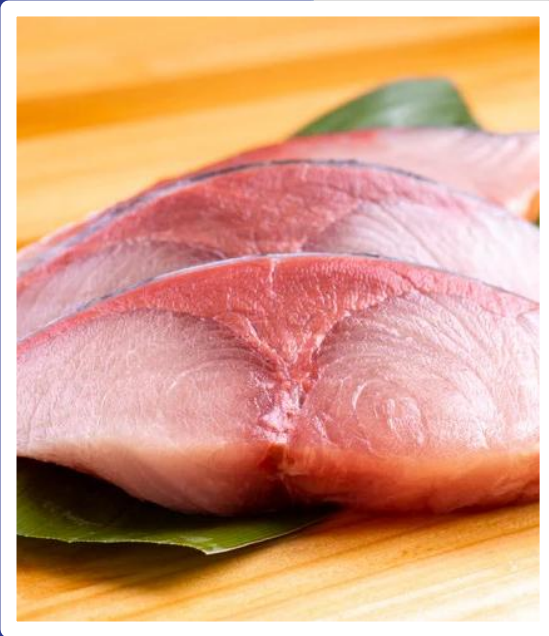


Amberjack is the common name for several large marine fish in which genus?

- A. Thunnus
- B. Seriola
- C. Gadus
- D. Scomber

# QUIZ

## Question #2



Which fishing methods are commonly used in the commercial harvest of amberjack?

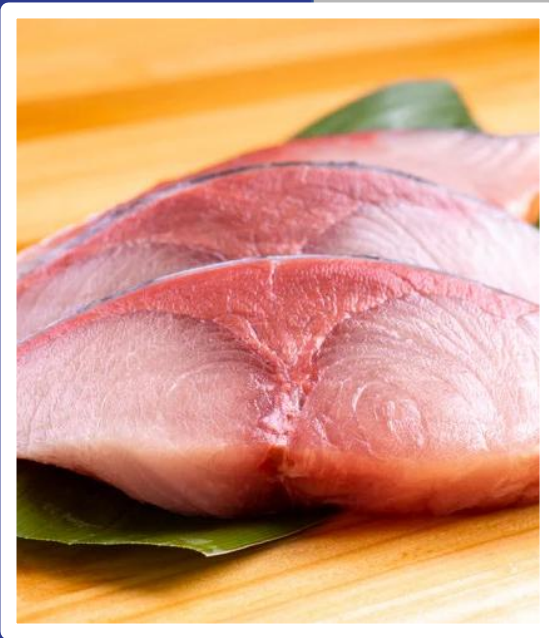
- A. Hook-and-line
- B. Handlines
- C. Longlines
- D. All of the above

# QUIZ

## Question #3

Approximately how much protein does a serving of amberjack provide?

- A. ~10 g (20% DV)
- B. ~19 g (38% DV)
- C. ~25 g (50% DV)
- D. ~30 g (68% DV)

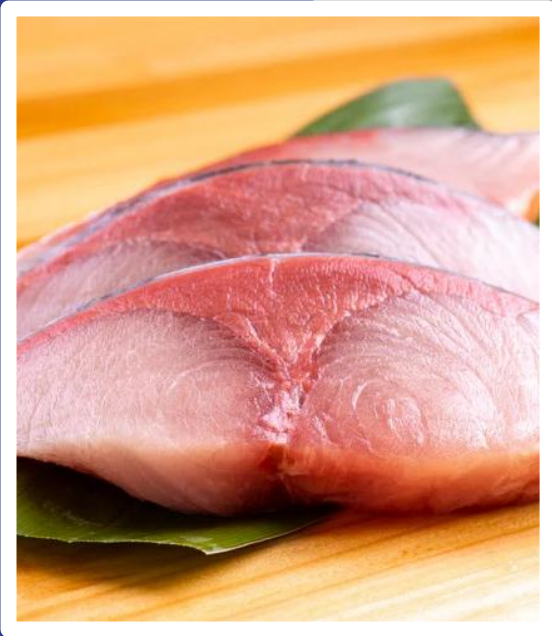


# QUIZ

## Question #4

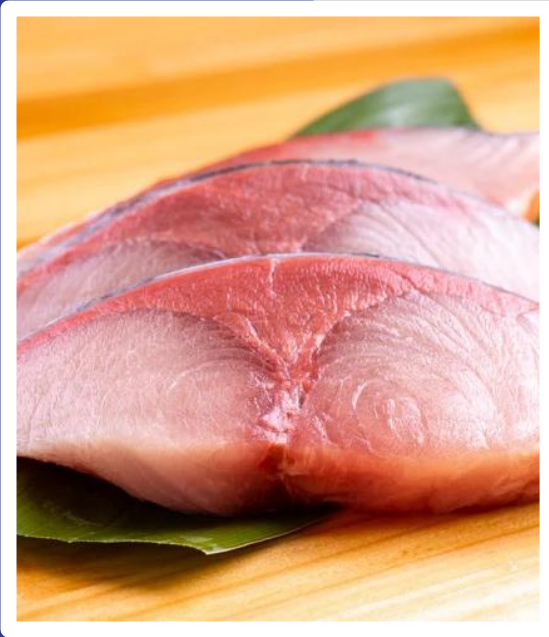
Which mineral in amberjack functions as an antioxidant and supports thyroid health?

- A. Phosphorus
- B. Magnesium
- C. Selenium
- D. Calcium



# QUIZ

## Question #5



Which amberjack has darker, more tender flesh with a richer flavor, often marketed as kampachi?

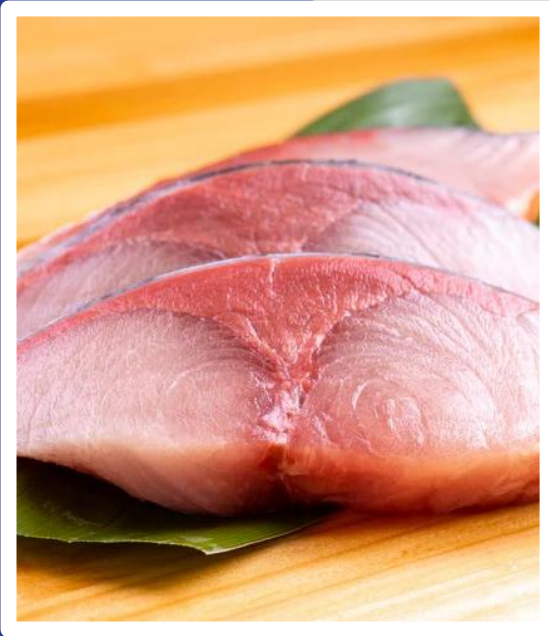
- A. Lesser Amberjack
- B. Almaco Jack
- C. Banded Rudderfish
- D. Greater Amberjack

# QUIZ

## Question #6

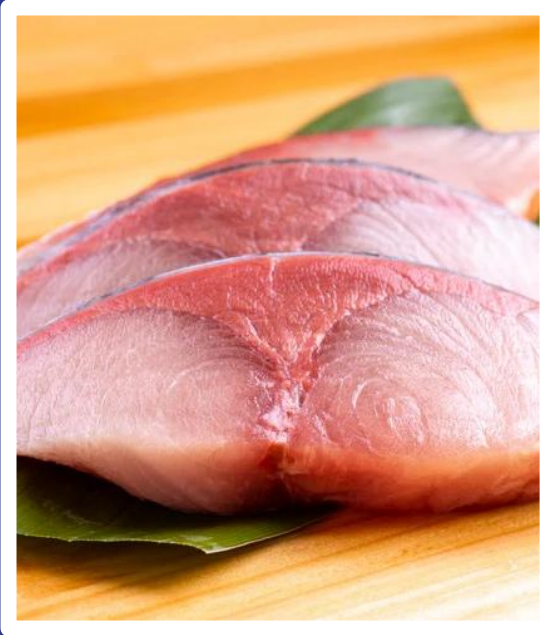
Yellowtail, also known as hamachi or buri, is prized for its rich, buttery, mild flavor.

- A. True
- B. False



# QUIZ

## Question #7

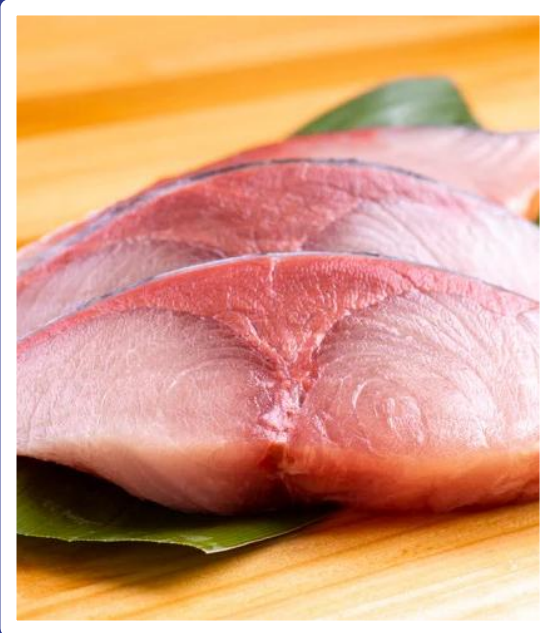


What kind of aroma should fresh amberjack have?

- A. Strong, fish smell
- B. Sharp, ammonia-like smell
- C. Sweet, fermented scent
- D. Clean, like the ocean

# QUIZ

## Question #8



At what temperature should fresh amberjack be stored in the refrigerator?

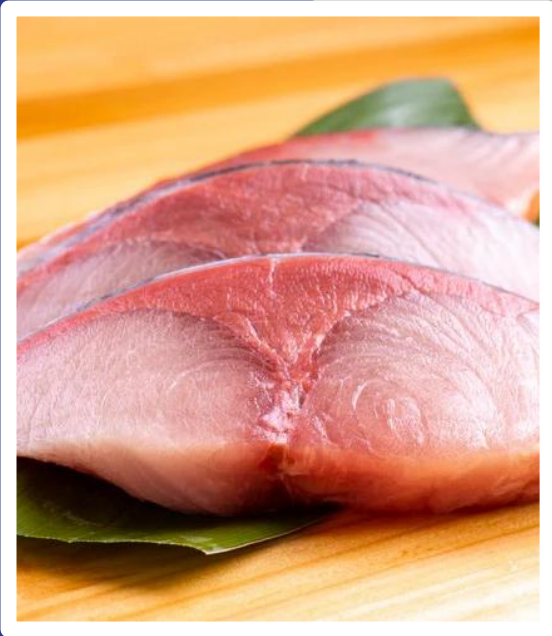
- A. 20–25°F (-6 to -4°C)
- B. 32–34°F (0–1°C)
- C. 40–45°F (4–7°C)
- D. 54–56°F (12–13°C)

# QUIZ

## Question #9

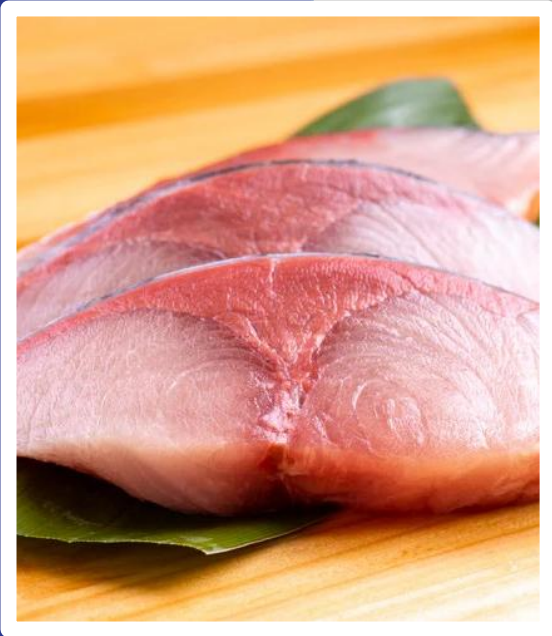
Amberjack fillets should never be breaded and fried because the fish is too oily.

- A. True
- B. False



# QUIZ

## Question #10



Japan, global leader in farming and consumption of amberjack, ranks it among the country's "Big 3" aquaculture fish alongside:

- A. Eel and salmon
- B. Salmon and halibut
- C. Halibut and tuna
- D. Tuna and eel

# JOIN US NEXT MONTH!

Stay tuned for the next ACF Ingredient of the Month! Be sure to visit the Online Learning Center (OLC) to download a copy of each month's ingredient presentation. Don't forget to take the official IOTM quiz through the OLC to earn one hour of continuing education credits toward professional certification.

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