

# Hybrid Striped Bass



Latin names: *Morone chrysops* x *M. saxatilis*  
*Morone saxatilis* x *M. chrysops*

Common names: hybrids, sunshine bass,  
palmetto bass



**Description:** The most common hybrid striped bass on the market is a cross between a white bass female (*Morone chrysops*) and a striped bass male (*Morone saxatilis*). This hybrid is also sometimes called a sunshine bass or reciprocal cross. The other less common hybrid is the palmetto bass or original cross, which involves a striped bass female and white bass male. These hybrids are produced in hatcheries and do not occur in nature. Both hybrid crosses are distinguished by the broken stripes that run along the sides of the fish.

**Product Forms:** Hybrid striped bass are usually shipped whole in the round on ice, though some companies do offer skin-on and skinless fillets. Sizing is as follows:

	Whole round	Fillets with skin
Medium	1.5 – 2.0 lbs	4.0 – 6.5 oz
Large	2.0 – 2.5 lbs	6.5 – 8.0 oz
Extra Large	2.5 – 3.0 lbs	8.0 – 10.0 oz
Jumbo	3.0 – 5.0 lbs	10.0 oz and larger

Hybrid striped bass has also been served as an alternative to suzuki (sea bass) in Japanese restaurants.

**Buying Tips:** When purchasing whole fish in the round you should look for bright, shiny eyes (direct contact with ice can cause eyes to become cloudy). It is best to avoid fish with sunken or bloody eyes. Skin

should be shiny and moist with tight scales. The gills should be red to pinkish in color. When purchasing fillets, look for flesh that is translucent, bright, firm, and elastic. Avoid fillets with separation or gaping between the muscles and drying along the outer edges, as these are signs of improper preservation.

**Preparation Tips:** Hybrid striped bass are typically bought in retail stores live, whole head-on gutted, or as fillets. Live and whole head-on gutted fish may be gutted, the gills removed, and cooked whole. Live fish and whole head-on gutted fish may be filleted. Typical fillet methods are the butterfly fillet, in which the head is removed and the fish is cut from the belly along the

## Nutritional Facts:

Per 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of raw edible portion

Calories	97
Total fat	2.33 grams
Saturated fat	0.5 grams
Protein	18 grams
Cholesterol	80 milligrams
Sodium	69 milligrams
Vitamin and mineral contribution	9% Daily Value
Vitamin B12	3.2 micrograms (133% DV)
Phosphorus	198 milligrams (20% DV)

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database (Values for Striped Bass) for Standard Reference, Release 25 (2013)

back with the sides remaining intact at the back creating a butterfly shaped cut, or the typical fillet, which is taken off the backbone from the sides. Purchased fillets or fillets from whole fish should be used quickly or kept on well-drained ice. Large hybrid striped bass may be cut into steaks and cooked bone in.

**Storing Tips:** Fish should be stored in the coldest part of your refrigerator near 32 °F. Whole fish can be stored in ice in a container with a perforated bottom to allow water to drain away from the product. Fillets should never come in direct contact with ice; they should be placed in a plastic container that is then surrounded by ice. Fish can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. For longer storage, wrap the fish in airtight packaging and place it in the freezer. If fish will be eaten raw it is best to freeze it first to kill any parasites. However, be aware that freezing does not kill all the microorganisms present.

**Cultivation:** Hybrids require 18 to 24 months to reach marketable size (1 to 2 pounds). Hybrid striped bass fingerlings (about 1.5 to 2 inches long) are stocked into large, earthen ponds during the spring or early summer. The fish are fed several times daily with a balanced diet of pelleted feed. Environmental quality (dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, etc.) are checked at least twice daily to ensure optimum conditions for growth and

health of the fish. The ponds are harvested the following year beginning in the fall and throughout the winter and spring.

**Harvest:** In 2011 the U.S. produced 7.7 million pounds of hybrid striped bass, of which 5.8 million was sold whole on ice and 1.9 million was sold live. Product is available year round.

**Markets:** Hybrids (especially live fish) are shipped to a variety of markets that serve white tablecloth and specialty restaurants. Many of these markets are in the northeastern U.S. and even as far north as Toronto, Canada.

**Sustainability:** Thanks to considerable research, the amount of fish meal in hybrid striped bass diets is being minimized, with soybean meal or other high quality protein sources as a replacement. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch® ranks U.S. farmed hybrid striped bass as a “Best Choice” for sustainability of farm-raised species.

**History:** Striped bass were originally found along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. They were introduced to the West Coast in the early 1890s and established reproducing populations. The striped bass is considered an excellent food and game fish. Commercial harvest of striped bass began to decline drastically in 1973, and commercial and sport fishing is prohibited or strictly regulated throughout much of its range. The culture of hybrid striped bass began in the mid-1980s. Initially, cultured fish were grown in tank systems in California; however, most hybrids are currently produced in earthen ponds in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana. The culture of hybrid striped bass grew rapidly in the 1990s and is now one of the largest aquaculture industries in the U.S. in terms of sales. The growing popularity of Louisiana Cajun and Creole cuisine may encourage market expansion.

**For additional information, contact:**

## Baked Stuffed Hybrid Striped Bass

### Ingredients (Serves 6)

2 pounds hybrid striped bass fillets  
½ cup finely chopped white onion  
¼ cup chopped celery  
½ cup chopped mushrooms  
3 tablespoons butter or margarine  
2 cups soft bread crumbs  
1 teaspoon salt  
⅛ teaspoon pepper  
pinch of dried tarragon  
lemon/lime juice  
3 or 4 sliced tomatoes

### Directions

Preheat oven to 375 °F. In a large sauce pan, sauté onions, celery and mushrooms in butter for 5 minutes. Add bread crumbs, salt, pepper to vegetable mixture. Grease a large, shallow baking dish and arrange the fillets in the baking dish. Drizzle fillets with lemon or lime juice and spread stuffing mixture over fillets. Cover with sliced tomatoes. Bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes.

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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

The work reported in this publication was supported in part by the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center through Grant No. 2010-38500-21142 from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture.