

FOOD & WINE

15 Chefs Share Their Favorite Ways to Use Canned Seafood

We love tuna, but also canned salmon and sardines, saucy mussels, and squid in ink.



When [Greg Vernick](#) was planning to open [Vernick Fish](#) in Philadelphia last August, he knew tinned fish would make an appearance on the menu. The James Beard Award-winning chef had been a fan since a 2009 trip to Barcelona, where he dined at chef [Albert Adrià](#)'s now-shuttered tapas bar, Inopia, and found an entire section of the menu dedicated to canned seafood. "My mind was blown," he said. "It changed my appreciation for the food—it was so simple and restrained."

Nowadays, his restaurant serves [Ramón Peña sardines](#) and sourdough, a deceptively delicious and easy-to-replicate dish: grilled-to-order bread spread with a compound butter (made with garlic, tomato, chili, lemon zest, and salt) and lined with the plump, tender fish. The finishing touch is a splash of lemon juice, zest, and a little sea salt.

"Unfortunately, when they think of tinned fish, a lot of people think of the tuna fish sandwich of childhood," said the chef. "And don't get me wrong, canned tuna and mayo makes a meal for a lot of families, and if you like it, it's hard to screw it up. But it's become the perception of what tinned fish is, and I think we under appreciate it a little more than other regions of the world." Besides using canned fish to throw together a simple toast, Vernick suggests it as a base for vinaigrettes, pasta sauces and marinades.

While tuna might be the most popular tinned fish variety, in the past two months, the pandemic has prompted new shopping patterns and sales of [many types of canned seafood are booming](#) in the US. (Philly-based grocery co-op chain Weaver's Way reports a 40% jump from February to March.) If you haven't explored the world of canned fish yet, now is the time to get on board. Beyond tuna, [options abound](#), from mackerel filets to razor clams, mussels in spiced sauce, and octopus in olive oil. They're sustainable, long-lasting, and add a punch of umami flavor to so many dishes.

Below, 15 chefs share their favorite ways to use canned fish.

Make quick breakfasts

"Growing up in Nigeria as a kid I loved canned sardines! You can cook them with tomato paste, garlic, and onions for a quick and easy breakfast. I also stock at least a couple flavors of marinated anchovies in the fridge at all times." — [Kwame Onwuachi](#), *Food & Wine Best New Chef* and executive chef [Kith/Kin](#) at *InterContinental - the Wharf* in Washington, DC