

Topic Page: [Cod](#)

Definition: **cod** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

(14c) **1** :any of various bottom-dwelling fishes (family Gadidae, the cod family) that usu. occur in cold marine waters and often have barbels and three dorsal fins: as **a** : one (*Gadus morhua*) of the No. Atlantic that is an important food fish **b** : one (*Gadus macrocephalus*) of the Pacific Ocean **2** : any of various bony fishes resembling the true cods



Summary Article: **cod**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

Image from: [The characteristic configuration of the fins -... in Philip's Encyclopedia](#)

member of the large family Gadidae, comprising commercially important food fishes. The family, whose members are found in the N Atlantic and Pacific, includes the tomcods, the haddock, and the pollacks (or pollocks). The cod was extremely important to the economic and social growth of New England; it has been used as a Massachusetts state emblem. Today the cod stocks have been greatly depleted off the coast of New England and Newfoundland owing

to overfishing and in some cases increasing ocean temperatures, and restrictions on the catch have been imposed. The European Union has also restricted cod fishing in the North Sea, but it is unclear if the restrictions will be sufficient to preserve cod populations. All cods are bottom-feeders with soft fins; the large ventral fins are located under or in front of the pectorals rather than behind them as in other fishes.

The Atlantic cod has two distinct color phases, gray-green and reddish brown. Its average weight is 10 to 25 lb (4.5–11.3 kg), but specimens weighing up to 200 lb (90 kg) have been recorded. Young Atlantic cod or haddock prepared in strips for cooking is called scrod. Cods feed on mollusks, crabs, starfish, worms, squid, and small fish. Some migrate south in winter to spawn. A large female lays up to five million eggs in midocean, a very small number of which survive. The Pacific cod is found N of Oregon.

The tomcod resembles a young Atlantic cod with long, tapering ventral fins. It rarely exceeds 15 in. (37.5 cm) in length and lives close to shore. There is also a Pacific tomcod. The pollack, also called coalfish or green cod, is a plump olive-green cod found in cool waters of the Atlantic. Pollacks have forked tails and pale lateral lines and grow to 3 ft (90 cm) and 30 lb (13.6 kg).

The haddock is the most important food fish of Atlantic waters; most of the large annual catch is marketed frozen. It is also found in colder European waters. Haddocks are also bottom-feeders but are found in deeper water (up to 100 fathoms). They are smaller than cods, reaching 30 lb (13.6 kg) and a length of 3 ft (90 cm), and have black lateral lines and dark side patches. Finnan haddie is lightly smoked haddock.

Lings and hakes, related to the cod but in several families in the same order, are fishes of commercial importance found in warmer waters. More slender than the cod, they are strong swimmers, preying on crustaceans and small fish. The freshwater, codlike burbot, found deep in northern streams and lakes of North America and Eurasia, is in the same family as the ling. The burbot has a single barbel on its chin.

Cods are classified in the phylum Chordata, subphylum Vertebrata, class Actinopterygii, order Gadiformes, family Gadidae. Lings and burbot are in the family Lotidae; hakes in the families

Merluciidae and Phycidae.

See Kurlansky, M. , *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World* (1997).

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cod. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/cod>



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