



Good Fish Finger Guide 2018

Good fish finger Guide

Introduction

Fish fingers. A staple on pretty much every 'children's menu' and a freezer 'must have' if there are kids in the household. However, they're often sneered at as not being 'proper' fish and certainly wouldn't be considered a sustainable option.

Perhaps it will come as a surprise then that research by the Marine Conservation Society reveals there are fish fingers in the freezer section that are more sustainable than some unprocessed seafood on the fish counter!

85% of 48 retail own-brand and branded fish fingers investigated by MCS came from sustainable green rated 'Best Choice' sources when the charity's [Good Fish Guide](#) ratings were applied to the fish ingredient part of the product.

We are leading the way on changing habits and our [Good Fish Finger Guide 2018](#) reveals which supermarkets are selling fish fingers you can be confident in buying and which brands you should think about leaving in the freezer.

Contents

How we rated the fish fingers	1
What we found	1
Where the fish in your fish fingers comes from (catch areas)	2
Detailed results by product	3

How we rated the fish fingers

We assessed the sustainability of 48 retail own brand and branded fish fingers from all the major supermarkets and fish finger brands in the UK.

From January – September 2018, we contacted the major supermarkets and fish finger brands requesting source information of where and how the fish that goes into the fish fingers is caught or farmed, and evidence to verify the source information. We applied the Good Fish Guide ratings* to the fish ingredient and conducted a qualitative assessment of the labelling on pack.

Unlike unprocessed seafood (fish that isn't canned, mixed or breaded), there is no legal requirement for retailers and brands to put details of seafood origins on pack for processed seafood. However, some retailers including Aldi, Lidl and Sainsbury's included detailed information of seafood origins on pack across most of their fish fingers.

What we found

48 fish finger retail own brand and branded fish fingers were investigated containing four different species:

- 50% were Atlantic cod fish fingers
- 2% were mixed Atlantic & Pacific cod fish fingers
- 33% were Alaskan pollock fish fingers
- 15% were haddock fish fingers
- Roughly 19% of the products had enough detailed information on where and how the fish were caught on pack for consumers to make an informed choice.
- About 23% of the products had no credible ecolabels, no sustainability information and not enough detail about how and where the fish were caught on pack for consumers to make an informed choice.
- 60% of the products had a Marine Stewardship Council ecolabel on pack

**Ratings of fish fingers correct as of October 2018*

Good fish finger Guide

Where the fish in your fish fingers comes from (catch areas)

Atlantic cod mainly caught in Iceland (3) or Northeast Arctic (4)

Alaska pollock mainly caught in Bering Sea (5) & Aleutian Islands (1) and Gulf of Alaska (2)

Pacific cod mainly caught in Bering Sea (5) & Aleutian Islands (1) and Gulf of Alaska (2)

Haddock mainly caught in Iceland (3) or Northeast Arctic (4)



Good fish finger Guide

Detailed Results By Product

Please visit www.mcsuk.org/responsible-seafood/about-our-ratings for full rating explanation

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Asda smart price fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, Trawl Mid-Water		1
Asda omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, Trawl Mid-Water		1
Co-op omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Trawl Mid-Water	MSC	1
Iceland 35 (average) breaded fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska & Aleutian Islands, trawled mid water		1
Marks and Spencer gluten free cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Iceland, Trawl - Otter trawl / longline		1
Morrisons savers fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, midwater trawls		1
Morrisons omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering sea and Aleutian Islands, midwater trawls		1

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Sainsbury's cod fillet fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Iceland, line caught	MSC	1
Sainsbury's 'deliciously free from' cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Iceland, line caught	MSC	1
Sainsbury's basic fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, trawl caught	MSC	1
Sainsbury's omega-3 pollock fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, trawl caught	MSC	1
Tesco omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Trawl Mid-Water	MSC	1
Waitrose essential cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Iceland, line caught	MSC	1
Waitrose 6 essential chunky cod fillet fish fingers in breadcrumbs	UK	Atlantic cod	Iceland, line caught	MSC	1
Young's omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, midwater trawl		1

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Aldi northern catch 10 cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	FAO 27 - Subarea I - Barents Sea and Subarea II Norwegian Sea, Spitzbergen and Bear Island and Subarea V - Iceland and Faroes Grounds, Midwater otter trawls, Bottom otter trawls, Handlines and pole lines mechanized, set longlines, traps not specified, beach Danish seines, set gillnets anchored, set longlines, with purse lines purse seines	MSC	2
Aldi northern catch 15 omega-3 fish fingers	UK	Alaska pollock	FAO 67: Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska FAO 61: Sea of Okhotsk Mid otter trawls	MSC / Aldi have said that the MSC ecolabel will be on pack mid October	2
Asda cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Barents and Norwegian Sea, demersal otter trawl		2
Birds Eye haddock fish fingers	Germany	Haddock	Northeast Arctic & Norwegian Sea, Trawls, Seines, Lines and Hooks	MSC	2

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Birds Eye cod fish fingers	Germany	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic & Norwegian sea, Trawls, Seines, Lines and Hooks, Gill Nets and similar nets	MSC	2
Birds Eye wholegrain fish fingers	Germany	Alaska pollock	Sea of Okhotsk, Trawls	MSC	2
Birds Eye omega-3 fish fingers	Germany	Alaska pollock	Sea of Okhotsk, trawls	MSC	2
Birds Eye crispy batter fish fingers	Germany	Alaska pollock	Sea of Okhotsk, Trawls	MSC	2
Co-op 6 ultimate fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic (Barents & Norwegian Sea I&II), Iceland, Trawl bottom and demersal, Longline, Gill-net, Danish seine and Hook and lines	MSC	2
Lidl omega-3 fish fingers	Germany	Alaska pollock	Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Gulf of Alaska. Russia Sea of Okhotsk, trawls	MSC	2

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Lidl cod fish fingers	Germany	Mixed Pacific and Atlantic cod	FAO 67: Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Gulf of Alaska FAO 27: I Barents Sea (Subarea I) II Norwegian Sea, Spitzbergen and Bear Island (Subarea II) IIa2 Norwegian Sea (Subarea 2) III Skagerak, Kattegat, Sound, Belt Sea and Baltic Sea (Subarea III) IIIa North sea (Subarea 3) IV North Sea (Subarea IV), Trawls, hooks and lines	MSC	2
Lidl fish fingers XXL	Germany	Alaska pollock	FAO 67: Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska FAO 61: Russia Sea of Okhotsk	MSC	2

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Lidl deluxe chunky cod fillet fish fingers	France	Atlantic cod	FAO 27: I Barents Sea (Subarea I) II Norwegian Sea, Spitzbergen and Bear Island (Subarea II) IIa2 Norwegian Sea (Subarea 2) III Skagerak, Kattegat, Sound, Belt Sea and Baltic Sea (Subarea III) IIIa North sea (Subarea3) IV North Sea (Subarea IV)	MSC	2
Marks and Spencer jumbo breaded cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea, Hooks and Line, Longline, Trawl - Otter Trawl, Danish Seine		2
Morrisons breaded cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Barents and Norwegian Sea (I & II), Bottom trawls		2
Morrisons free from gluten & wheat cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Barents and Norwegian Sea (I & II), Bottom trawls		2
Sainsbury's cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Norway, line caught	MSC	2

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Sainsbury's chunky cod fish fingers, taste the difference	UK	Atlantic cod	Norwegian Sea, Spitzbergen and Bear Island or Iceland, hooks and lines	MSC	2
Tesco cod fish fingers	Poland	Atlantic cod	Barents Sea & Norwegian Sea, Demersal trawls/ Longlines	MSC	2
Tesco everyday value fish fingers	Poland	Atlantic cod	Barents Sea & Norwegian Sea, Demersal trawls/ Longlines	MSC	2
Waitrose freshly breaded jumbo cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Barents and Norwegian sea, line caught	MSC	2
Young's wheat free cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea), Demersal Otter Trawl		2
Young's gastro tempura battered cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea), Demersal Otter Trawl		2
Young's cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea), Demersal Otter Trawl		2


Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Young's gastro chunky breaded cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea), Demersal Otter Trawl		2
Young's gastro chunky breaded haddock fish fingers	UK	Haddock	Barents & Norwegian Sea, demersal otter trawl	MSC	2
Asda haddock fillet fish fingers	UK	Haddock	Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea), Demersal otter trawl		3
Morrisons haddock fish fingers	UK	Haddock	Barents and Norwegian Sea (I&II), bottom trawled		3
Waitrose essential 6 chunky haddock fillet fingers in breadcrumbs	UK	Haddock	Iceland, line caught	MSC	3
Waitrose crisp & golden frozen 6 chunky battered haddock fish fingers	UK	Haddock	Iceland, line caught	MSC	3

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Waitrose crunchy & golden frozen 6 chunky battered haddock fish fingers	UK	Haddock	Iceland, line caught	MSC	3
Tesco finest 6 chunky cod fillet fish fingers	Poland	Atlantic cod	East Baltic Sea, demersal trawls		4

Good fish finger Guide

Brand	Produced in	Fish Ingredient	Capture area/ Method	Credible ecolabel	Rating
Marks and Spencer chunky breaded cod fish fingers	UK	Atlantic cod	Canada / Newfoundland 3P's Atlantic cod fishery NAFO 2J3KL; Hook & Long Line / Otter Trawls / Gill Nets / Danish Seine		 Improver* Fishery in a credible Fishery Improvement Project aiming for MSC certification.

*** 5 Improver**

Indicates fish which have been assessed and rated 5 (red) due to significant environmental concerns yet credible efforts to improve the fishery or farming system have been agreed through a Fisheries or Aquaculture Improvement Project – a FIP or an AIP - and work is underway. Such projects are normally publicly listed at www.fisheryprogress.org as this one is <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/canada-atlantic-cod-2j3kl-longlinetrawl-gillnet-hook-line>. MCS wants to encourage environmental improvements in fisheries and fish farms, and so does not recommend avoiding these fish, as we normally do for seafood rated 5, thus providing, we hope, an incentive for businesses to support credible improvement projects like this.

Marine Conservation Society (MCS)
a leading UK charity working to make
sustainable seafood the only choice for
consumers in the UK.

www.mcsuk.org/responsible-seafood



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