

# On Eating Oysters

"You always start with oysters," seafood consultant Jon Rowley is fond of saying. "They come at the beginning, before anything else." And there is good reason for that.

To fully appreciate an oyster in its prime, you bring all your senses to bear. You feel the rugged nature of the beach and tides in the shell as you raise the oyster to your lips. You inhale the briny essence of the ocean captured in the liquor in which the oyster bathes in its shell.

And then there's the flavor. Serve the same six oysters to six different people some time and have everyone write down what their oysters taste like. The answers will have only a little to do with each other, for no two people experience an oyster the same way. True, all *Ostrea edulis* have a distinct metallic aftertaste, but the taste itself? That's the trick. Because with oysters, you are dealing with the initial taste, then the aftertaste following along right behind.

"The taste of the oyster is like the color of the sea," Rowley says. "You can't quite capture the color in words. And then it changes from moment to moment."

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**Los Angeles Times**