



SEAWEED

Perspective for Foodservice

Daymon

What is it?

Seaweed is part of the algae. However, not all algae are seaweed. According to Live Science, Algae are a diverse group of aquatic organisms that can conduct photosynthesis.

There are two main groups of algae:

MICROALGAE

Microalgae are unicellular algae that cannot be seen without a microscope. They are also referred to as phytoplankton. There are estimated to be thousands to hundreds of thousands of different species of microalgae. The two main types are dinoflagellates and diatoms.

MACROALGAE

Macroalgae are multicellular algae that can be seen with the naked eye. They can be found in the ocean, being usually referred to as seaweed. The main types are red algae, green algae, and brown algae.



Example: Chlorella, Spirulina



Example: Kelp, Wakame

SEAWEED IS MACROALGAE FROM THE OCEAN FOUND IN COASTAL AREAS. DUE TO THE GROWTH OF ASIAN CUISINE, IT IS NOW USED WORLDWIDE.

Seaweed Origin



It is said to have been 1st consumed in Japan at least 1,500 years ago, becoming a staple in many Asian cuisines beyond Japanese, such as Chinese and Korean.

THE RISING POPULARITY OF THE ASIAN CULTURES IS GIVING MOMENTUM TO SEAWEED ACROSS BORDERS

Seaweed is advancing in other continents, such as Europe, by providing novel experiences beyond traditional Asian restaurants. It is an innovative and versatile ingredient that responds to consumer **health and sustainability** trends and adds a **distinct “umami” flavour and texture to the items.**

As consumers are more concerned about sustainability, the relevance of provenance grows. As a result, **seaweed brands can emphasise local sourcing of seaweed** to connect to the customer need for transparency and sustainability of their products and relate to local origin.

Asia accounts for around 97% of seaweed production. Although, the prospects for **seaweed production in other parts of the world are promising.**

Top European producers



Why is it relevant?

Seaweed is a trendy ingredient whose use in food and drink products is expected to rise due to its culinary assets and versatility.

SEAWEED CULINARY ASSETS

HEALTH

It is naturally **high in minerals, omega-3 and protein, and lower in sodium** making it a key ingredient for health-conscious consumers.

SUSTAINABILITY

It is **more sustainable than land-based agriculture**, making it appealing for eco-development.

SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE

It **provides a complete sensorial experience** through its “umami” flavour, a unique texture and colours, and its ocean scent.

TIPS & TRICKS

Seaweed represents a key ingredient for plant-based solutions by offering nutrients, such as seaweed calcium and seaweed protein.

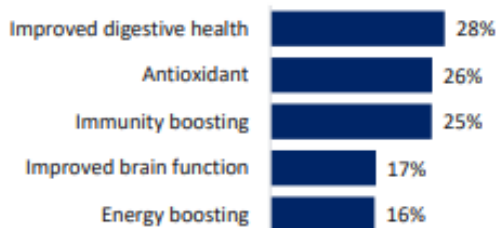
Seaweed is becoming increasingly popular due to its green and healthy properties. According to the UN Seaweed Manifesto, cultivating algae helps capture and store planet-heating carbon dioxide, and it is more sustainable than agriculture as it does not require land or irrigation. Additionally, this superfood is great for your health as it contains protein, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals such as iron and calcium.

CONSUMER PERCEPTION

55%

of the global consumers believe Seaweed has a positive impact on health (Global Data)

Global: What do you think are the greatest health benefits of seaweed?¹



The top 5 benefits

Seaweed is **perceived to have an overall positive impact** on health.



Pinterest found a **60% increase in searches for “green algae”** in 2022, whereas **“seaweed snacks recipes”** saw a **245% uptick**.

Most Common Varieties of Edible Seaweed

Seaweed is common in consumer goods, but not all the varieties are edible due to their toxicity levels. Among the +12 000 species of seaweeds described in 2023, about 700 have been identified as suitable for consumption.

6 MOST COMMON EDIBLE SEAWEEDES BY MICHELIN GUIDE

KOMBU



It is a brown algae from the kelp family. It is usually sold dry in strips and can be used as seasoning to add the umami flavour. Powder kombu is also used in Japanese tea.

NORI



It is part of the red algae and usually comes pressed into thin, dried, green sheets. It can be eaten as a snack or to make sushi.

WAKAME



Despite its green tone, it is a brown kelp. The leaves are fat and slippery, with a salty-sweet flavour. Usually sliced into strips to use in salads or dried as a snack. It is used in miso soup. It should not be added in excess because it swell rapidly after cooking.

OGONORI



It is a red algae, and it is available in dried strips and powdered form. It is the source of agar-agar, a jelly-like substance used to make vegetarian gelatin or puddings. Besides, ogonori can be used pickled or in salads.

UMIBUDO



It is one of the few seaweeds sold fresh to preserve the tiny clusters that grow on long stems. The tiny pearls burst in the mouth when eaten and release the brininess of the sea. Blanching and shocking them in cold water removes the extra salt. It is a staple in Okinawan cuisine, where it is eaten raw with soya sauce.

HIJIKI



It is a brown seaweed which turns black after being boiled and dried. It has a strong salty flavour. In Japan, hijiki is often simmered with vegetables or fish with seasoning like soya sauce and sugar, while in Korea, it is eaten as a seasoned side dish or cooked with rice.

Seaweed Usage

Due to its superfood properties, seaweed is becoming more popular in the food and drink industry. In Europe, 26% of new seaweed launches were meals, which indicates its relevance for foodservice.

- ✓ It can be **used as an ingredient** in product development;
- ✓ But it can be **used as an end-product** when preparing several dishes.
- ✓ **Seaweed can be found in different storage options:** frozen, fresh, and ambient (dried, usually as a snack or powder);

SEAWEED CAN BRING SEVERAL ADVANTAGES TO FOODSERVICE

PREMIUM DISHES

Seaweed enables chefs to prepare different dishes that explore a different experience, and that can benefit from local credentials.

HEALTHY DISHES

Due to its health properties, seaweed is an opportunity for chefs to develop healthier dishes by using it as an alternative to salt.

SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE

Seaweed-based dishes can provide clients with a unique and sensory experience through colour, texture, fragrance, and flavour.

Many renowned chefs use seaweed in their cuisines to produce novel dishes and provide a one-of-a-kind experience. There are **plenty of different ideas to use it:**



Chefs can use the seaweed leaves, fresh or frozen, in different dishes, for example, as a pairing component or in a salad.



Chefs can use the seaweed to season their dishes. For example, rice or butter seasoned, usually with dried seaweed.

Chefs Using Seaweed

MATHIEU GUIBERT, TWO MICHELIN STAR CHEF: “WE NEED TO MAKE ALGAE SEXIER, INNOVATE”

A French chef, Mathieu Guibert has been using seaweed in his dishes. He can cook seaweed in a simple way, for example, chopped very finely with ground lettuce, to season a tartare. Or he can make a mixture of seaweed, dried at low temperature and go into a foaming butter, pairing a fillet of John Dory. According to him, seaweed can radically change a dish, as it makes you feel the ocean. You can have something very aromatic today with a seaweed broth.



JAMIE OLIVER BOOSTS SEAWEED SALES AFTER HAILING IT A SUPERFOOD IN HIS LATEST COOKBOOK

Jaime Oliver, a well-known British chef, has started using seaweed as a salt substitute. According to the chef, seaweed is one of the secrets to losing weight. Asda has seen increased demand after the television chef promoted green seaweed as a superfood that can aid weight loss in his best-selling book. In the UK, seaweed sales have increased by 125%, thanks to a Jamie Oliver cookbook.



Seaweed Products in Foodservice Operators

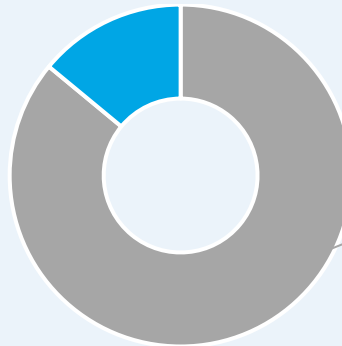
Among the Foodservice Operators, **Seaweed Products** are still small in terms of offer but **emerging**. Aligned with consumer trends, they have the potential to **keep growing in the market**. Currently, National Brands represent most of the offer within Foodservice.

SEAWEED PRODUCTS

AVERAGE SKUs

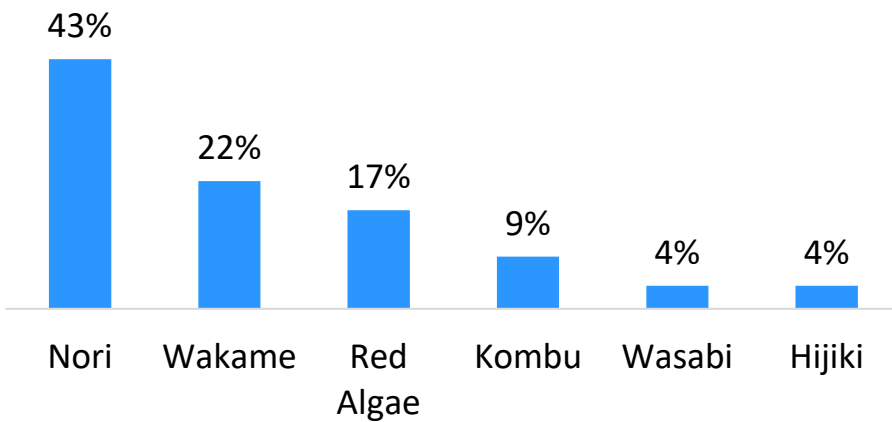
#7 per retailer

Private Brand, 14%



National Brand, 86%

SEAWEED TYPES



Nori is the most popular seaweed type, among Foodservice products, being mostly present in **Nori Sheets**, which are key to **making sushi** or can be an idea to make wraps.

38%
Of SKUs



Snacks are a key category for seaweed products in the Foodservice assortment. Indeed, 38% of the seaweed products in Foodservice in Europe are snacks.

Product Examples: Seaweed Chips, Seaweed Crackers, Seaweed Strips

Seaweed Products in Foodservice Operators

Product Examples in selected categories

SNACKS



Crispy Seaweed



Seaweed Chips



Seaweed Strips



COOKING INGREDIENTS



Nori Sheets



(UK & NL)



Seaweed Seasoning



Dried Seaweed to Season



FRESH LEAFS SEAWEED



Wakame Salad



Red Algae



Kombu



Summary

Seaweed, a type of marine algae, is abundant in maritime and coastal regions and is widely used in consumer goods, including food and drink.

Due to its sensory appeal, it has the potential to drive differentiation in the food service industry and solve the growing demand for more healthy and sustainable options.

Key Highlights

- ✓ Seaweed represents a healthy and sustainable that is becoming more and more local
- ✓ Seaweed is perceived to have an overall positive impact on health.
- ✓ Due to its health properties, seaweed represents an opportunity for chefs to develop healthier dishes, using it as an alternative to salt.
- ✓ Seaweed is a versatile ingredient growing in usage beyond well-established dishes and applications. Seaweed-based dishes can provide clients a unique sensory experience through colour, texture, fragrance, and flavour.
- ✓ Over the last 12 months, National brands have been dominating the offer and the new Seaweed products entering the assortment of foodservice operators;
- ✓ Snacks is a key category for product development with Seaweed, representing most of the new launches, and being the top category within Foodservice assortment of Seaweed products.

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