

### Caviar



The word caviar comes into English from the Italian import in the 16th century, but it ultimately stems from the Persian word for egg. Although the Persian term technically refers to both the sturgeon and the roe, it has come down into English meaning only the egg. Caviar from fish other than the sturgeon usually has an adjective naming such origins, such as “salmon caviar.”

The Persians were early cultivators of caviar from the Caspian Sea and later the Black Sea, believing in the roe’s vague medicinal qualities. Others in the area learned the value; Ancient Greek writers mention caviar, including Aristotle, who said the arrival of the caviar indicated the end of the banquet. Later, it was apparently a staple in Roman parties, well known for their excesses. Caviar seems to have been reserved for use by the upper echelon in both these societies even though it was relatively easily available.



Iran is the world's largest producer and exporter of caviar (annual exports of more than 300 metric tons), followed by Russia.



