



Pacific Northwest Best Fish Co. does custom processing and smoking. The shop has earned a reputation among Alaska fishermen, who will drive their catches all the way down to Clark County for smoking.

The market continues to evolve to meet customers' needs and to survive the economic downturn. While the market used to sell more exotic fish, today it does more special orders. Gift boxes are available at the Ridgefield store and through the website.

The shop's smoked seafood is sold at gourmet and natural markets as far away as Minnesota, but locally can be found at New Seasons Markets and Sheridan Fruit Co. in Portland.



Photo by Todd Gunderson



Pacific Northwest Best Fish Company café serves up classic ocean fare

STORY + PHOTOS BY JESSICA SWANSON

Seated on the deck facing Northwest 10th Avenue in Ridgefield, you wouldn't know there was a drop of water within a hundred miles of the Pacific Northwest Best Fish Company. But the café and market procure and cook up some of the freshest, tastiest seafood from the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean.

Folks tend to rave about the PNWB café; my dining companion on my first trip had been many times and knew just what was great.

We tried the three-piece "house special" halibut fish and chips, which were hand battered, fried to perfection and served with skinny fries and coleslaw, for \$10.99. The clam chowder, another classic, was delightfully lumpy and chewy, and perfectly spiced. And an 8 oz cup was a reasonable \$4. For another \$2, I could have added a sourdough bread bowl. We special ordered a single crab cake, which usually comes on a sandwich, and did not really stand alone, as it was more the consistency of cookie dough, quite mealy and not at all crispy on the outside.

The traditional Caesar salad is enormous and extremely well priced at \$4.99. We added blackened wild salmon for only \$3 more. The salad was great, but the blackening spices were heavy and flavors were indistinguishable. Soda, lemonade and iced tea are available, alongside a full menu of espresso drinks.

On another trip, I couldn't resist the fried halibut sandwich, served on a rosemary bun, with lettuce, tomato, pepper jack cheese and tartar sauce for \$9.99. The halibut being the star of the show, I ended up dismantling the heavy and somewhat dry sandwich

and just eating the fish. My companion tried a non-seafood item, the grilled chicken taco, a steal at \$5.99. The "taco" was actually a huge chicken burrito wrapped in a flour tortilla with fresh salsa, chipotle cream sauce and shredded cabbage.

The café also serves up plenty of other Northwest dishes like a shrimp and crab cocktail, both calamari and clam strip baskets, coconut shrimp and chips, various tacos and several chicken options.

The seating areas leave something to be desired. On the deck, diners are pestered by flies; inside the market is fine, if you don't mind ocean aromas. The tables are designed for communal dining. There are a few spots inside the adorable coffee hut. Diners order and pick up their items at a walk-up window and retrieve their own condiments, plastic ware and napkins.

After lunch, shop at the market with its outstanding selection of fresh and wild seafood, house made sauces and dips and oven-ready creations like twice baked potatoes and mushrooms stuffed with crab and other seafood. The market also sells sauces, condiments and sides from mostly local vendors – anything that compliments a well-cooked fish – and the biggest selection of wines from Clark County I have seen. **NB**

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BEST FISH CO.

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