

Smoked Salmon World Cup

Ten enthusiastic COUNTRY LIFE tasters spent an afternoon inspecting, savouring and musing on the pick of Britain's smoked salmon. Milly Cumming presents the results

Four semi-finalists



One winner

Two finalists



Tasters

After 16 large mouthfuls of smoked salmon each, the COUNTRY LIFE team members felt satisfied that they had found the ultimate in fishy delight

Sixteen entries



Hebridean Smokehouse

Hot-smoked salmon, £14.95, 250g, mail order; Organic peat-smoked salmon £16.15, 250g (01876 586209; www.hebridean-smokehouse.com)

Verdict: Highly burnt, tobacco-like flavour. A peaty one, low in salt



Tom's Kitchen

Unsmoked Irish Organic smoked salmon, £9.95, 200g (0800 7821 8818)

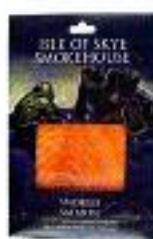
Verdict: The vicar's tea party would need more to excite the parishioners. Lashings of cucumber, perhaps?



Dundonnell

Piri piri smoked salmon, £8.60, 200g (01249 806500; www.dundonnell-smoked-salmon.co.uk)

Verdict: A sensuous texture, but slightly disappointing flavour



Isle of Skye Smokehouse *

Smoked slowly over sherry-soaked white log-chippings, £5.95, 200g (0800 787 3687; www.isky-smokehouse.co.uk)

Verdict: A firm, fleshy and flavour-some fish. I would cheerfully produce this at a film premiere



The Fish Society *

Fish & Juniper Scottish wild smoked salmon, £7.60, 227g; £27.70, 960g (0800 279 3973; www.thefishsociety.co.uk)

Verdict: A superb, biting, strong smoked salmon. This fish is a true heavyweight—like an 18-year-old single-malt whisky



Daylesford Organic *

Scottish organic smoked salmon, £9.95, 200g (0800 083 1833; www.daylesfordorganic.com)

Verdict: A subtler inception of peat and burnt wood. One for those with more sensitive taste buds



Waitrose

Heathland Scottish smoked salmon, £5.69, 140g (0800 188889; www.waitrose.com)

Verdict: Perfectly sound, good smoked salmon; smouldering with enough smoke to alert a Red Indian



Sainsbury's *

Birch and juniper-smoked salmon, 'Taste the Difference', £5.50, 160g (0800 636282; www.sainsbury.com)

Verdict: I like it! An interesting salmon curiosity. Enjoyable texture, excellent all-rounder



Sleepy Hollow Smokehouse *

Half side of sliced, interfiled salmon, from £31.15 per kilo (01445 731304; www.sleepyhollowsmokehouse.com)

Verdict: Very rich, quite a fierce, smoky fish, with real bite



Donald Russell

Smoked salmon packs, £30, 120g or £38 for an uncooked side; smoked salmon rognie fillets, £26, 500g (01467 629666; www.donaldrussell.com)

Verdict: Uncut, it looks wonderfully fresh, wild and healthy. The taste is not as rich as some, but more natural



Ugie Salmon Fishings

Finest traditional oak-smoked salmon, £5, 200g (01779 476209; www.ugie-salmon.co.uk)

Verdict: A rose-red fish, oily in appearance, although strangely not in the mouth. A comforting one, good for a winter fireside



Uig Lodge *

Whole side of smoked salmon, on the skin, £36 inc. delivery. Hand-sliced side, £42; £25, 450g, sliced; £17, 200g, sliced (01851 673396; www.uiglodge.co.uk)

Verdict: This salmon evokes an Eskimo banquet. Salty, smoky and rich in colour, like an amber jewel



Inverawe Smokehouse *

Scottish classic smoked salmon, £2.95, 100g; £10.50, 200g; or £15.95, 350g mail order (0833 8373 486; www.inverawesalmon.co.uk)

Verdict: A typical smoked salmon. No surprises, but it wouldn't embarrass a king



Harrods

Open-brand smoked salmon, wild cure, £8.40, 299g; £16.80, 499g (020 7739 1233; www.harrods.com)

Verdict: A discreet, charming and self-deprecating salmon. Smells slightly lemony



Fortnum & Mason *

Oak-smoked Welsh wild smoked salmon, £20, 200g (0845 309 1707; www.fortnumandmason.com)

Verdict: A strong gamey flavour, with good texture and aftertaste. Subtle and appetising



H. Forman & Son

Preserved, genuine wild Scottish smoked salmon, £14.75 per kilo; £22.95, 200g (020 8525 2352; www.formanandson.com)

Verdict: A good texture and wonderfully presented, but looks better than it tastes

* Asterisks denote the smoked salmon that made it through to the quarter-finals