LIQUID IN CANNED SALMON

The United States Food and Drug Administration’s Canned Pacific Salmon Standard of Identity (21 CFR 161.170) prohibits the addition of water to canned salmon. None of the liquid is a result of the addition of water to the product, but the amount of liquid in canned salmon is highly variable. It can be anywhere from 18% to 28% of the total weight of the contents of the can. This variability however, is not a reflection of the practices of the canner. Canned salmon is cooked in the can, and the liquid present in the final product is only the natural juices that come out of the meat when the salmon is cooked.

The quantity of liquid in canned salmon is dependent on the composition of the fish muscle (protein, fat, moisture and ash content) and forms of pack (presence of bone and/or skin). Naturally occurring water is inversely proportional to the quantity of fat while the content of proteins tend to vary less in relationship to the fat content. A Salmon species with high fat content like King Salmon will have lower moisture content within the flesh than the content observed in flesh of a leaner species like Pink Salmon. There is also a significant variation in fat and water in fish muscle within the body or fillet. Portions of flesh near the tail will be leaner than portions near the belly. Other variations are the result of the fish size, age and seasonality of the catch, principally the sexual maturity of the fish at the time of catch.

The Canned Pacific Salmon Standard of Identity only allows for one or more of the following optional ingredients: Salt and edible salmon oil comparable in color, viscosity and flavor to the oil which would occur naturally in the species of salmon canned.

Under the CODEX Alimentarius Food Standards, canned salmon packed with edible oils other than salmon oil is distinguished as a product which requires a drained weight and if any packing medium is used, the medium shall form part of the name of the food. Net weight is the only requirement for canned salmon packed exclusively with salt and/or salmon oil.

As a result of the U.S. FDA Standard of Identity stipulation that no water be added to Canned Pacific Salmon, the applicable U.S. nutrition labeling regulations require that all nutrient content declarations on the label must be based on the total contents of the can.

Do not throw out canned salmon liquid - it is perfectly good food. Many recipes that call for canned salmon call for inclusion of the liquid.