

## 12 MOST EXPENSIVE CULINARY INGREDIENTS

Some ingredients around the world are very expensive because they are rare or difficult to find or produce.

Here are some of the most expensive ingredients in the world:

### 1. White Truffles (Italy and Croatia)



The white truffle also called Alba madonna is the fruiting body of an underground mushroom from the Piedmont and Tuscany regions of Italy and the Istrian peninsula of Croatia.

White truffles and more than black truffles are found in Italy and grow only in certain areas along with certain trees.

Truffles are found with the help of dogs or sniffer pigs at events that turn into real village parties and the delicacy is sold at prices ranging from \$4,000 to \$10,000 a pound.

The delicacy grows near trees such as oak, hazel and poplar in very particular weather conditions and can be rare for a few thousand dollars. The highest amount ever paid for white

truffles was \$417,200 for two units and was one 900 g from Tuscany and another 400 g from Molise both in Italy. The high price was raised at an auction, but in the market the figures remain high and a pound or about 450 g costs around \$3,600.

In addition to the white truffles, other ingredients used in different recipes are very expensive, but they are nonetheless appreciated.

## **2. Matsutake (Japan)**



The Matsutake mushroom grows on the roots of a few tree types and occurs most often in Asian and European countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, Finland and Sweden, but can also be found in North America.

In recent decades the production of the most appreciated Japanese Matsutake among countries has fallen due to the incidence of a parasite on the coniferous trees where the fungus grows. The problem caused the price to rise sharply to \$1,000 per kilo of the Japanese ingredient. The price of other countries is considerably lower and is around \$90 per kilo.

### **3. Saffron (Mediterranean)**



Saffron used in paellas, risottos, meats, pastas, sweets are very common all over the world. Saffron is the most expensive spice in the world because it is extracted from the stigmata of *Crocus sativus* flower that blooms for only two weeks and needs to be harvested manually.

The work is meticulous to reach the dust that for 1/2 kg of saffron requires up to 75,000 flowers the equivalent of a football field.

The best saffron rank is attributed to cultivated in Spain, but there is also production in Iran, Morocco, Greece, Italy and most of the Mediterranean countries. Prices range from \$1,100 to \$11,000 per kilo.

### **4. Yubari Melon (Japan)**

The Yubari melon is a Cantaloupe hybrid characterized by its green rind and orange flesh and perfectly rounded shape. Its skin is softer and cultivated in the greenhouse of the homonymous city in Japan and highly valuable.

Yubari melons are exceptionally sweet and which experts believe are the result of cultivation in volcanic soil. Every year the first two fruits harvested in the season are auctioned and the values are not sweet.



In 2012 the melons, which together had four pounds, were sold for \$ 12,500. However, it was not the highest price achieved, as in 2008 the final sale price was a record \$ 26,000 for the pair.

Yubari melon more than just a fruit is a luxury item given in Chugen a typical annual Japanese festivity.

### **5. Densuke Watermelon (Japan)**

Densuke watermelon is grown exclusively in Hokkaido in Japan and has a dark rind, no seeds, no streaks or spots and only grows on the island of Hokkaido in Japan. Only 10,000 Densuke watermelon are produced per year which increases demand. it's the price.

The high price of the fruit is justified by its rarity and taste and said to be unmatched. Each Densuke watermelon can cost \$250. In June 2011 one of the first watermelons harvested was auctioned for 650,000 yen which gives about \$6,300.



**6. Kopi Luwak Coffee or Civeta Coffee (Indonesia and Philippines)**



In addition to money the person who wants to taste this coffee needs to have courage. Kopi Luwak, considered the most expensive coffee in the world, is made from grains extracted from the feces of the civet a carnivorous mammal of the civet family.

Kopi Luwak coffee production mainly exists in Indonesia and the Philippines, where animals select and eat grains that traverse the animal's digestive system.

Coffee beans are excreted with bacteria and enzymes that give a special flavor to coffee made from the beans.

Besides the different taste, the high price is due to its rarity, as each year only 230 kilos of grain are produced and produced in Sumatra in Indonesia and sells for about \$600 a thousand dollars a kilo.

### **7. Beluga Caviar or Iranian Caviar (Caspian and Black Sea)**

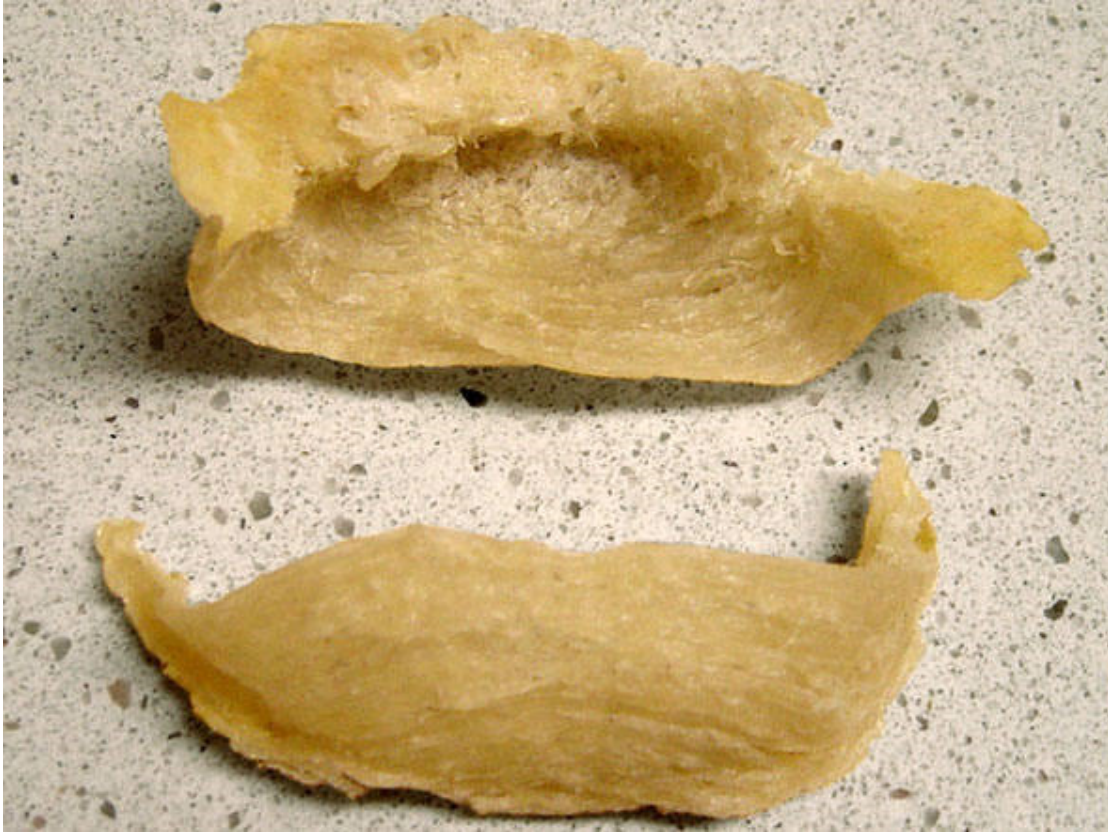


Among the fine foods the caviar is guaranteed and known in the market as Golden Caviar Souls the golden eggs are taken from albino beluga sturgeons of about 70 years old and living only in the Caspian Sea.

Found in the Caspian and Black Sea, the price per kilo can reach \$10,000. The price seems like a bargain near the value charged for the kilo of the variation.

Instead of black the color of the eggs is golden and to match some caviar packages are made in 24 carat gold.

### **8. Swallow Nests**



Swallow saliva is the raw material for the nests that serve as the ingredient for a sweet soup much appreciated in Asian countries such as China.

However, the nests take time to be built by the birds and have a right time to collect and the value to enjoy a recipe made with them and high. The price of a kilo is around \$2,400.

### **9. Smoked Salt Flower (Normandy or France)**

The Smoked Salt Flower is not a common salt, sold for about \$1,600 a kilo keeps inside it the flavors of minerals and algae from where it is taken in Normandy France.

The crystals are smoked in oak barrels that were used to age wine, including the aromas of the drink in its bouquet. Its price is \$210,000 per kilo or more than 400 times the price of kilo of common salt.



**10. Wagyu Beef (Japan)**





Wagyu Beef also known as Steak or Kobe Beef is a very special meat produced in Japan and precisely in Kobe.

The differential is the treatment of ox that only eats grain, drinks beer, gets massage and spends the days listening to music so that the meat has the correct fat content and reaches the best flavor and tenderness and in Japan a steak of this meat can cost 200 dollars.

## **11. Foie Gras**

Foie Gras hated by animal cause activists is the fatty liver of duck or goose and the last considered the most expensive is only possible because the animals are force-fed, causing the organ to function at the limit and which many producers dispute.

The name which in French means fatty liver and together with truffles foie gras is considered one of the greatest delicacies of French cuisine.

Force feeding is prohibited in several countries such as Argentina, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and California in the USA and many other countries.



The result is a liver with almost 50% more fat than it normally would have and a buttery texture that can be enjoyed as an appetizer and the food costs about \$100 per pound.

## **12. Tie Guan Yin Tea**



Tie Guan Yin Tea also called Goddess of Steel is a special version of the herb produced in Fujian province of China.

The tea is similar to green tea but has a more floral aroma and some of the flavor remains thanks to the complex production system kept secret for centuries and which requires practice to follow eight key steps and the price per kilo reaches \$112.