

# BROWNE TRADING COMPANY

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

## Scorpionfish

(*Scorpaena scrofa*)

**WILD CAUGHT**



### Catch Region

Mediterranean Sea,  
East Atlantic Ocean

### Seasonality

Year Round, *Spawns*  
*Early Summer*

### Catch Method

Line  
Bottom Drag

### Yield

(Fillet Percentage)

36 %

### Flavor Profile:

Mild, somewhat Sweet

### Texture Profile:

Firm

### Substitute:

- Sculpin
- Redfish

**WITH ITS UGLY BODY, LARGE HEAD, AND DANGEROUS “SPIKES”, the Scorpionfish** certainly stands out from even the most unusual fishes. This distinctly bright orange-to-red skinned fish is further distinguished by the coarse, bumpy armor-like plates on its back and the sharp venomous spines on its dorsal, ventral and anal fins. Dangerous but not deadly, the scorpionfish draws much attention, but would prefer to be left alone to hunt in solitude.

Also called the “Red Scorpionfish” (*Rascasse rouge* to the French), *scorpaena scrofa* is the largest specimen of the scorpionfish family –sometimes called “granddaddys” when landed – at its largest it can weigh over 5 pounds, although they are commonly caught between 2-4 lbs. This large-scaled Scorpionfish is found throughout the Mediterranean Sea and in spots in the eastern Atlantic Ocean to the British Isles. A nocturnal hunter, it feeds on crustaceans, mollusks and other small fishes along the sea floor, then spends its days in burrows, caves and reefs, away from potential predators. Scorpionfish lay in wait, camouflaged on the sea bed hoping to ambush unsuspecting prey. Its predatory behavior is remarkably similar to the land-faring arthropod, the scorpion; hence its name.

Scorpionfish are coveted by most Europeans as a precious, even essential, ingredient to traditional bouillabaisse. It is for this dish that they are generally most sought. They are also commonly whole roasted (a solution to dealing with their many bones) in aromatics, or as the main ingredient in stews. Their poisonous spines can be easily – and carefully – removed by cutting them off with kitchen shears, although whole cooking effectively denatures and eliminates their venom. Their flakey flesh cooks white, is firm, and has a mild and somewhat unique flavor that some compare to cooked lobster meat.

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