

Oysters have long been thought of as an aphrodisiac. Does science agree?

For centuries, people have considered oysters an aphrodisiac, with at least one legendary lover, [Giacomo Casanova](#), reportedly attributing his sexual prowess to eating dozens of them at a time.

Experts say these briny mollusks do contain elements that may enhance sex drive, though there is no scientific evidence showing a direct link to a more robust libido.

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Raw oysters are high in zinc — a [3.5-ounce serving](#) contains [more than five times](#) the recommended daily amount for an male adult and more than seven times for a female adult. Zinc is associated with [improved testosterone levels](#), which influences male and female sex drives, and is [essential for male fertility](#), research shows.

Zinc also boosts dopamine, a neurotransmitter involved in pleasure and reward-seeking behaviors and may [influence sexual responses](#) in men and women, said [Julia Zumpano](#), a registered dietitian for the Center for Human Nutrition at the Cleveland Clinic.

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There's another explanation as to why oysters may bring out a romantic side: the placebo effect, said [Waguih William IsHak](#), a professor of psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai and the University of California at Los Angeles... Meta-analyses on placebo treatments for [male](#) and [female](#) sexual dysfunction have shown that people given a placebo reported an improvement in sexual functioning — in some studies, [at a rate as high as 50 percent](#).

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