The Oyster as a Superfood

In the Zeeland village of Bruinisse in the Netherlands, where the wind always carries the scent of salt and sea, lived Lena — an elderly GP who still trudged out onto the mudflats in her wellies every morning. Not to work, but to forage for oysters. No luxury treat for her, no party snack.

For Lena, oysters were a daily ritual. Her personal medicine, as she called it.

“I’m 72,” she told the young journalist who came to interview her. “And I don’t take supplements. Never needed them.”

The young man gave a slightly awkward chuckle. “And that’s… because of oysters?”

Lena nodded. “The Japanese ones. They grow just off the coast here. *Crassostrea gigas.* You might know them as an ‘invasive species’. But to me, they’re nature’s little gems.”

She pulled a bucket up from the water, filled with oysters that shimmered like tiny amulets. “Look,” she said. “Oysters contain far more zinc per gram than beef.

They’re packed with vitamin B12, selenium, iron, and iodine. And they even contain an antioxidant that may protect brain cells — DHMBA, it’s called.”

She looked at the journalist, who now seemed genuinely intrigued.

“What I eat is now backed by research,” Lena continued. “Did you know oysters can contain over 1000% of the recommended daily amount of zinc? And they’re rich in omega-3 fatty acids like EPA and DHA? All in a perfect, natural balance with copper, iron, selenium, and iodine. And the body absorbs those minerals even better than from supplements.”

“You won’t find this in a bottle,” Lena said. “What nature packages in a single shell — no manufacturer can match that.”

She went on to explain how she’d felt energetic for years, how her focus stayed sharp, and how she rarely got ill. “It’s not yoga or smoothies,” she joked. “It’s the oysters. One of the few true superfoods.”

The journalist frowned. “Aren’t there any risks?” “Of course there are,” Lena replied. “You need to clean them properly. And in the summer months, when the water’s warmer, it’s best to cook them rather than eat them raw — because of Vibrio bacteria.”

She pointed to her notebook, where she’d jotted down cooking times like recipes for health. At least 63°C for 15 seconds to kill microorganisms once the oysters open. Discard any that remain shut. “And raw? Only if you’re healthy.”

Lena also stuck to a strict limit: no more than 12 oysters a day, and only twice a week at most.

“You don’t need more than that,” she said. “Too much zinc can throw off your copper and iron balance. And you don’t want to build up cadmium either — although luckily, the oysters here are tested regularly and usually stay well within safe levels.”

The journalist now looked at her with admiration. “You certainly don’t seem worse for wear,” he said with a smile.

She gazed at the glistening shells in her bucket as if looking at an ancient secret. No hype. No detox. Just primal nourishment.

At the end of the interview, the journalist was still staring at her in wonder. “So… oysters as a superfood?”

Lena smiled and pulled out a shell. Scratched into the mother-of-pearl was one word: Balance. “If I say it,” she said, “I’m just an old woman with mud on her boots. But if science says it — suddenly it’s revolutionary. Take your pick.”

As they walked back to the village, the wind picked up. The sea stirred. The world of nutrition too. But beneath the surface, they waited quietly: the oysters. Powerful. Honest. Ready to be discovered.

Want to experience for yourself why oysters are rightly called a superfood? Join us for the Oyster Theme Dive on 7 September. A unique opportunity to discover first-hand just how nutritious, flavourful, and remarkable these shellfish are — from harvesting to tasting.

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