It is uncertain when the **first fish & chip shop** opened in New Zealand, but it was long before the First World War (1914-1918). Friday night became 'fish & chips night' for many households.

At first, snapper was the preferred species for battered fillets in the North Island, but as catches for this fish declined, it was replaced by hoki, shark (marketed as lemon fish), and tarakihi. Gurnard and blue cod predominate in South Island fish and chips.