

Cross-country differences

Cockles support a strong place-based identity which is built up around the history, heritage and cultural associations of people with this important shellfish.



Present vs. past

In northern countries, such as the UK and Ireland, cockle gathering is now less of a community activity and the cultural connections with cockles tend to be more in the past than the present.

In southern countries, such as Spain and Portugal, cockle harvesting is still strongly embedded and celebrated in coastal communities.

COCKLES

COCKLES project has been collating evidence and data from the 5 partner countries: Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland and the UK, to demonstrate the substantial role played by the common cockle* in provisioning, regulating as well as providing cultural and supporting services.

*Common cockle is *Cerastoderma edule*

Cultural services

Provided by the common cockle



Co-Operation for Restoring
Cockle Shellfisheries
and its Ecosystem Services
in the Atlantic Area (AA)

Interreg
Atlantic Area
European Regional Development Fund



→ Cultural heritage

The cultural links to cockles go far beyond harvesting them, they are part of the fabric of coastal communities.

The word cockle brings images of the sea-shore, it features in names of streets, restaurants, places and even race horses.



Cockle harvesting across Europe is part of the cultural identity in these communities.

Many local cockle recipes exist along the Atlantic such as the traditional empanadas in Galicia.



Folklore surrounding cockles appears in song such as the well-known Molly Malone folk-song in Ireland.

→ Inspirational

Cockle has been a rich source of inspiration through time and continues to inspire artists today.



Cardium Pottery, from the Neolithic period, was a decorative style of pottery from the Mediterranean region using shell impressions of cockle*.

Today, cockles are often represented in sculpture such as in Aveiro, Portugal.



→ Recreation & ecotourism

Many seafood festivals are dedicated to cockles and with the appreciation for coastal foraging, supporting a growing tourism sector.



**Cerastoderma glaucum* and *C. edule*.

→ Educational

Numerous educational materials as well as outreach activities are based on cockle.



→ Sense of place

Memories of playing with shells as children, collecting, or eating local cockle recipes were reported across all 5 nations, and were part of the 'sense of place'.

→ Aesthetic

Cockle shells are used as a decorative feature in modern and ancient walls, shell towers, grottoes, churches, garden, jewellery and Christmas decorations.



→ Spiritual & religious

According to archaeologists, shells placed at the entrance of funerary monuments were used to deter wicked spirits and keep the place free of misfortune.