

Hearty Clam Chowder

Another Fresh Seafood Idea

Available year-round, the native hard clam, or quahog, has always been a coastal favorite.

Clams may be bought in the shell or shucked. Those in the shell should be heavy and tightly closed, or should close when tapped lightly. They should have a pleasant, briny odor. Discard any with open or broken shells.



You can also buy clams already shucked. Clam meat is translucent. Its color ranges from ivory to golden brown. The liquid should be clear or slightly opaque.

Markets classify hard clams by size. The smallest, under 2 inches, is called the littleneck, after Little Neck Bay on Long Island, where they were once plentiful. We're using littlenecks in this recipe.

Smaller clams, including littlenecks, are firm but tender with a mild flavor. They can be steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, used in clambakes or other cooked dishes, or on the half-shell. (Be aware of all seafood safety concerns before eating raw shellfish.)

Remember to cook clams only until tender. Overcooking toughens them. Also, watch the amount of salt you add to clam dishes. Many clams taste salty naturally due to the salinity of the water where they grow, and any additional salt may be too much.

2 cups shucked littleneck clams, liquid reserved
4 slices bacon, diced
1/3 cup thinly sliced green onions, including tops
2 cups peeled and diced potatoes
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
2/3 cup thinly sliced carrots
1/2 teaspoon pressed garlic
clam liquid plus enough water to make 2 cups
1 teaspoon salt (see note above about salt)
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
2 cups light cream

In a large, deep pan, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon and reserve. Add onions, potatoes, celery, carrots, garlic, liquid, salt, pepper, Worcestershire and Tabasco to pan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer gently until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Add clams and cook until done, about 5 minutes.

Stir in cream. Heat just until steaming. Do not boil. Top with reserved bacon. Serves 6 to 8.

From: Mariner's Menu: 30 Years of Fresh Seafood Ideas

Contributed by Joyce Taylor

