

Shellfish is a term used to describe shelled molluscs and crustaceans used as food. Shelled molluscs include the clam, mussel, oyster, abalone and scallop; some crustaceans are the shrimp, lobster, crayfish, and crab. Squid, octopus and terrestrial snails, though edible and biologically similar to mollusc shellfish, are generally not considered to be shellfish.

Lobster and crab are considered delicacies in America, where families in the northeast region make them into the centerpiece of a summer banquet. Lobsters are generally associated with Maine and the gulf of Maine. The Chesapeake bay and Maryland generally are associated more with crabs. New England is also known for its Clam chowder, although New York and Rhode Island variants exist.

'Steamers' refers to a variety of littleneck clam (as opposed to a quahog). They are relatively small and have a white shell. The clams are put into a steamer pot and cooked for 10-15 minutes, during which the mollusks open their shells. Diners are advised never to eat a steamer that is closed, as it was most likely dead when prepared and may not be fit for consumption. Melted butter is generally a must-have for eating steamers.

In many major cities with active fishing ports, raw oyster bars are also a feature of shellfish consumption. When served freshly shucked (opened) and iced, one may find a liquid inside the shell, called the liquor. This is a primary feature of the raw bar, and should be sampled, if not enjoyed. Oysters are thought to be an aphrodisiac.

Jewish Kosher Law traditions forbid the eating of shellfish. A rational basis taken up by some nonreligious persons is the tendency of some shellfish to feed on waste or accumulate heavy metals or toxins in their tissues. Another is that some of these dishes are consumed raw (oysters, mussels, clams and shrimp, most notably) and can make a person very ill from food poisoning. Shells tightly closed when buying.

Imitation shellfish has some shellfish in it. Allergies

The smallest clams are called "little necks", next are the "cherrystones", and the largest is called a "chowder". In some markets, you may find "top necks" which fall between little necks and cherrystones. The little necks are best for clams on the half-shell (raw) because they are the tenderest. But, of course, they also may be steamed with garlic and olive oil or a little wine for a delicious dish. Steamed little necks complement mussels very nicely; the two can be steamed together. Don't forget; you can use your microwave to steam oysters, clams, and mussels. No water is necessary. Place them in a shallow dish with the hinge toward the outside cover, vent, and microsteam on HIGH for 6-8 minutes.

Cherrystones may also be used for clams on the half-shell, but they are typically used for baked clam appetizers such as clams casino. Chowder size are best if they are cut up or chopped and cooked. Smaller chowder clams may be cut into strips and breaded. Also, chopped clams are excellent for making a white sauce to top your favorite pasta.

Clams Casino

24 cherry stone clams in shell
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/4 cup chopped green onion
1/4 cup finely chopped green bell pepper
4 clove garlic
1/4 cup finely chopped celery
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 slices bacon, cooked until crisp and crumbled

Saute pepper and onion in butter with celery and garlic. Mix in lemon juice.
Place on clams and

Stuffed Clams

12 clams
½ c. crumbs
2T. minced onion
minced garlic
T. butter
Clam juice
t. chopped Parsley
t. chopped Basil
T. Grated cheese

Chop clams. Mix all ingredients except cheese. Place mix in clams shell and top with cheese. and bake for 8-10 minutes in 400 degree oven.

Mussels with tomato and leek

Two dozen mussels
Large tomato or 3 romas
Leek
1/2 cup white wine
¼ cup butter
2T fresh tarragon

Saute leeks in butter, add chopped tomato, toss in mussels and white wine, cover and cook til mussels are steamed. Add tarragon salt and pepper. Set aside mussels and reduce liquid by 1/3 pour over mussels.

Lobster salad.

2# Lobster meat cooked
½ red pepper diced
½ red onion diced
T. butter
½ t. mustard Dijon
3t chives or green onion
T. Reduced lobster stock
t. lemon juice
2/3 cup mayo

Corsely chop lobster. Saute onions and peppers in butter and sauté until limp.
In bowl mix all ingredients. Serve on hot dog bun for authentic lobster roll. Or serve on bed of greens.

Curry sauce for shrimp.

c.mayo
2t. curry
t. dill
lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl.

What is squid?

The squid is a mollusk related to the cuttlefish and octopus. It has ten tentacles, and like its cousin, the octopus, it also has a protective mechanism which releases a dark ink into the water when in danger. The meat is firm and white with a mild, slightly sweet and almost nutty flavor. Called calamari in Italy, the squid ranges from one inch in size up to eighty feet, but the most common size for eating is less than twelve

inches. Although the tentacles are edible, the body is the prime section of meat which can be stuffed whole, cut into flat pieces, or sliced crosswise into perfect rings. Squid lends itself to just about every cooking method imaginable and is often eaten raw in sushi dishes. Squid is available fresh, canned, frozen, dried and pickled.

Squid is also known as *calamari*, its Italian name. Since calamari seems to sound more palatable than squid, you'll most often see squid recipes listed as calamari on restaurant menus.

Squid selection and storage

For quick cooking, choose smaller squid with clear eyes and moist flesh. Smaller squid is more tender than the large ones. The aroma should be clean like the ocean with no strong, fishy smell. Cover tightly and refrigerate in the coldest section or on a bed of ice. Fresh squid should be used within two days or cleaned and frozen immediately for later use. Fresh squid is most abundant during spring and summer.

To freeze, place cleaned squid in heavy duty plastic freezer bags, being sure to squeeze out all the air, and seal tightly. Use within two months. If you don't have access to fresh squid, check the freezer section of your market. Cleaned, frozen squid is usually available, but you'll probably end up having to buy two to three pounds at a time. Frozen calamari can easily be thawed under cold running water.

Cooked squid can be refrigerated in a tightly-sealed container for two to three days or frozen for two months.

Cleaning squid

Whole squid is becoming quite popular with home cooks because they contain a gourmet prize: squid ink. Squid ink has become the secret ingredient for famous chefs around the world to not only color pastas and risottos, but also lend a touch of flavor. Squid ink is available in some gourmet markets at a hefty price, but if you buy whole squid, you can harvest your own squid ink. All it takes is a bit of careful cleaning. Cleaning your own will also save you money.

To clean squid, grip the head in one hand and the body in the other. Gently pull the head away from the body. The entrails should come right along with it. The ink sac will be in the innards. It is thin and silvery, about one inch long and 1/16th in width. You won't get much ink per squid, but a little goes a very long way. If you wish to reserve the ink, puncture the ink sac and squeeze the contents into a small bowl with about 1/4 cup of water or vinegar. Very small deposits of ink can also be found just behind the eyes.

The tentacles are perfectly edible. Sever them from the head just below the eyes. Remove and discard the beak from the center of the tentacles. Inside the body, you will feel a long, thin sliver of cuttlebone which must be removed and discarded. The outer colored skin can be scraped or rubbed from the body tube under running water, leaving the white meat. On smaller, more tender squid, it is not necessary to remove the outer skin, but on larger squid, the skin tends to toughen with cooking. Rinse meat and tentacles inside and out under cold running water.

Squid cooking tips and hints

- Squid must be cooked either a very short time or a very long time. Anything in between turns it into rubber. Two minutes over high heat is plenty. Beyond that will require at least 30 minutes to an hour to retenderize it.
- 12 ounces whole squid or 6 ounces cleaned equals one standard serving.
- One 6-inch squid weighs about 4 ounces. Measure the body, excluding the tentacles, and make 5 inches or less your goal for quick-cooked recipes and larger for long-cooked.
- Those weighing less than 10 ounces are the most desirable for tenderness. However, if you are looking to harvest the ink, you'll want squid longer than 5 inches.
- When purchasing uncleaned squid to use in a recipe that specifies cleaned squid, you will need approximately 25 to 50 percent more. Up to half the body weight can be discarded during cleaning.
- For squid that is cooked quickly, plan on 1/4 to 1/2 pound per person. For long-cooked dishes, count on at least 1/2 pound per person to allow for shrinkage.
- For salads, parboil the squid by dropping it into rapidly boiling water for no more than one minute. Plunge into ice water to stop cooking. Drain well, cut as desired and use in salads or marinate in your

favorite dressing.

- Conch or abalone can be substituted for squid in most recipes. The flavor and texture is very similar.