



Pictured here are Little Neck clams; there are about 12 in a pound.

Clam Up!

HERE'S AN EASY, ONE-PAN MEAL THAT'S SURE TO PLEASE

FOOD IS A POWERFUL MEMORY MAKER. Start with this recipe for a large bowl of freshly steamed clams in a white wine, garlic, and butter sauce, which is perfect for dipping crusty bread in. Add the company of good friends, a glass of white wine, and this meal will not be forgotten!

Years ago, I waited tables in a restaurant well known for steamed clams. The clams were served piled high in a glass bowl with another glass bowl inverted on top to be used for discarded shells. Once at the table, when the clams were set in front of the customer, the domed lid was removed, releasing the wafting steam, rich with the flavors of the sea, wine, butter, garlic, and fresh herbs. I will never forget this powerful food memory.

Today, this is still one of my favorite dishes. It is oh-so-easy to prepare. One pan and a lid are all it takes. The ingredients are simple, yet the flavor is richly complex. The crusty bread dipped in the briny flavorful sauce is the best part of this meal. Plates are optional. Put the bowl right on the center of the table and let everyone enjoy. The clams can be served as an appetizer or with pasta or another protein. Serve this dish with linguine and make it go further. Just toss in the cooked pasta and let it absorb the sauce. 



Clams in White Wine Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound of fresh clams
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1/2 lemon
- 2 tbs. extra virgin Spanish olive oil
- Fresh parsley and chives
- 3 tbs. unsalted butter divided
- 1/4 cup half and half
- Sea salt
- Loaf of crusty bread

METHOD

- In a medium-sized saucepan on medium heat, add 2 tbs. of extra virgin olive oil and 1 tbs. butter to the pan.
- Add 3 cloves of minced garlic to the sauce pan and mix with the oil. Cook slowly to soften, but do not burn.
- After about 1 minute of cooking the garlic, add 1 pound of fresh clams to the sauce pan and mix with the oil.
- Add a 1/2 cup of white wine, freshly chopped parsley, and a small amount of sea salt to the pan and mix with the clams. Cover the saucepan.
- After about 4-5 minutes remove the lid and all your clams should be open. Discard any that did not open.
- Remove from heat and add 2 tbs. unsalted butter and half and half. Stir into clams until melted and incorporated.
- Transfer the clams and sauce in the pan to a shallow bowl
- Garnish the plate with some freshly chopped parsley and a couple of slices of lemon. Serve with an abundance of crusty bread. Enjoy!



Culinary Notes

These are the best clams for steaming:

Steamers have an elongated shape to their hinged shell-like mussels. Steamers are soft-shelled clams with thin, white shells (handle gently). Each pound will have about 10 to 12 clams.

Cherrystones have a round, hard shell. They are about 2 to 3 inches in diameter and average 3 to 5 clams per pound.

Little Necks are the smallest of the hard-shell clams, known for having the sweetest flavor. They are about 1 to 2 inches in diameter and average 10 to 12 clams per pound.

Pro Tip

I highly advise anyone buying shellfish of any kind to buy it from a reputable fishmonger. Here, I go to Heinen's. They should never smell fishy, just slightly sweet and briny or salty.

Clams are done when they open. So, whether you are steaming, grilling, or baking, it's easy to know when they are ready to eat. Plan on 1 to 2 dozen clams per person depending on the size clams you use. To prepare the clams for steaming, soak the clams in cold, fresh water for 20 minutes. The fresh water will help the clams to filter out saltwater and sand from their shells. No sandy clams!



PHOTO: LINDA M. BARRETT

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