

# HOW TO COOK CLAMS

Test Kitchen Series No. 8

United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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# HOW TO COOK CLAMS

By Kathryn L. Osterhaug and Rose G. Kerr

Home Economists, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries



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United States Department of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, Secretary

Fish and Wildlife Service, Clarence F. Pautzke, Commissioner  
Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Donald L. McKernan, Director

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# HOW TO COOK CLAMS

Several species of clams are widely used for food (these commercially important species are but a few of the hundreds of species known). The market varieties of the east coast are different from those of the west.

On the Atlantic coast, the marketed species are the hard clam, the soft clam, and the surf clam. The hard clam, or hard-shell clam, is commonly called quahog in New England, where "clam" generally means the soft-shell variety. In the Middle Atlantic States and southward, "clam" is the usual name for the hard clam.

Littlenecks and cherrystones are dealers' names for the smaller-sized hard clams, generally served raw on the half shell. The larger sizes of hard clams are called chowders and are used mainly for chowders and soups. The larger sizes of soft clams are known as in-shells, and the smaller sizes as steamers.

On the Pacific coast, the most common market species are the butter, littleneck, razor, and pismo clams. The Pacific littleneck clam is a different species from the Atlantic hard clam.

On each of our coasts are areas famous for the quality of their clams. Notable among these are Pismo Beach in California, whence comes the delicious pismo clam, and Long Beach in Washington, famous for the razor clam. On the Atlantic coast, many areas are noted for their "cherrystones," soft clams, and surf clams.

Many traditions have grown up around the serving and eating of clams. Annual clam-eating contests are held in various coastal regions of the country. The connotations of the term "clambake" have extended the use of that word far beyond its original meaning. Few controversies (in cookery circles, at least) have more participants than that which centers on the proper way to make clam chowder.

Although they are served most often in chowders, there are a variety of good ways to serve clams. It is not only the fine distinctive flavor that recommends them as a food; they are also an excellent source of the "protective" nutrients, including proteins, minerals, and vitamins.

## BUYING CLAMS

Clams may be bought in three forms: In the shell, shucked, and canned.

### Shell clams

Clams in the shell are generally sold by the dozen or by the pound. They should be alive when bought. With hard clams, gaping shells that do not close when handled mean that the clams are dead and therefore no longer usable. With other varieties, there will be some constriction of the siphon or neck when the clam is touched. If fresh shell clams are held in the refrigerator at about 40° F., they will remain alive for several days.

### Shucked clams

Shucked clams are the clam meats that have been removed from the shells; they are generally sold by the pint or quart. Shucked clams should be plump, with clear liquor, and free from shell particles. Fresh shucked clams are packed in metal containers or waxed cartons, which should be re-

frigerated or surrounded by ice. When properly handled, they will stay fresh for a week or 10 days.

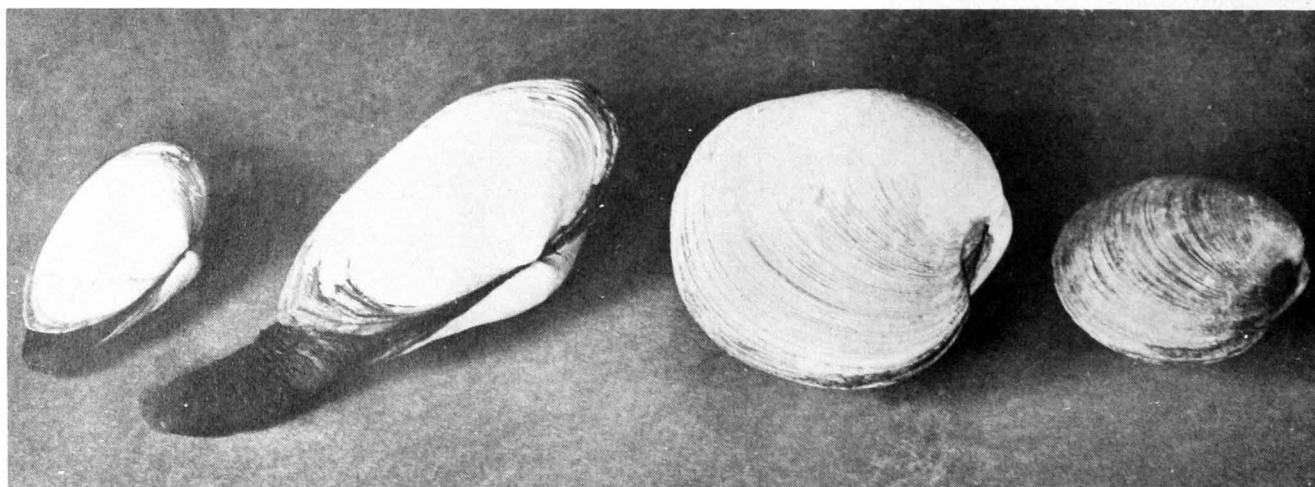
In recent years, shucked clams have been packaged and quick-frozen, a process that makes them available all of the year. Frozen clams should not be thawed until ready to use. Once thawed, they should not be refrozen.

### Canned clams

Hard, soft, razor, surf, and pismo clams are canned whole, or minced, or as chowder, and are packed in various sizes of cans from 3½ ounces to 4 pounds. Clam juice, broth, and nectar are also available canned or bottled.

### How much to buy

The quantity of clams to buy depends to a great extent on how the clams are to be served. To serve six persons, a safe rule is to buy three dozen shell clams, or one quart of shucked clams, or two 7-ounce cans.



"Steamer" size

"In-shell" size

"Medium chowder" size

"Cherrystone" size

**Soft clams**

**Hard clams**

## SHUCKING CLAMS

### Care of clams after digging

Wash off all surface sand with sea water. Cover clams with clean sea water or 2-percent brine ( $\frac{1}{3}$  cup salt to 1 gallon of tap water) and let stand for 15 or 20 minutes to allow the clams to cleanse themselves of sand—salt water is necessary if the clams are to open and discharge sand. The sand will settle to the bottom of the container. Change the water and let stand a little while two or three times. This step is important if the clams are to be steamed or eaten from the shell.

### Shucking hard clams

Wash the shell clams thoroughly, discarding any broken-shell or dead clams. To open a hard clam, hold it in the palm of one hand with the shell's hinge against the palm. Insert a slender, strong, sharp knife between the halves of the shell and cut around the clam, twisting the knife slightly to pry open the shell. Cut both muscles free from the two halves of the shell. If to be served on the half shell, remove only one-half of the shell. If to be used in one of the other recipes, remove and rinse the meat.

Since soft clams and surf clams do not have tight-fitting shells, they are easier to open.

An alternate method is to place the shell clams, after washing, in a small quantity of boiling water. Cover and steam them 5 to 10 minutes, or until they are partially open. Drain, remove, and wash the meat from the shells.



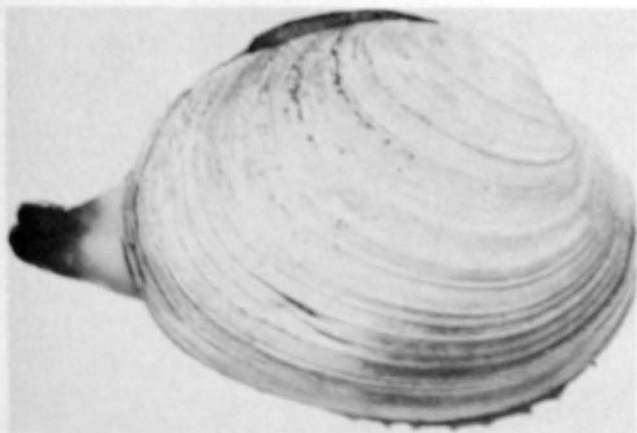
Inserting knife



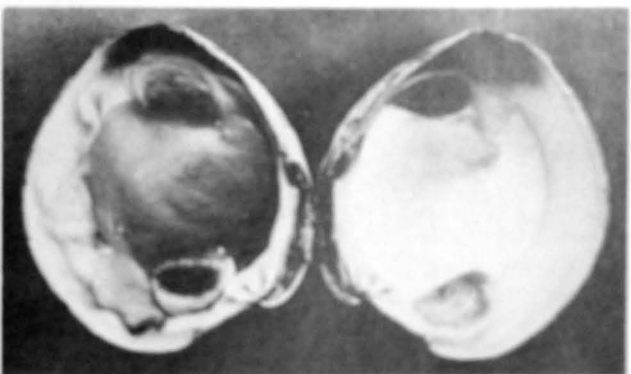
Cutting muscle



Cutting clam from shell



Butter clam



Clam on the half shell

## CLAMS ON THE HALF SHELL

36 shell clams (littlenecks or cherrystones)

Cocktail sauce

Lemon

Shuck clams (p. 3). Arrange a bed of crushed ice in 6 shallow bowls or plates. Place 6 half-shell clams on the ice with a small container of cocktail sauce in the center. Garnish with lemon wedges. Serves 6.

### Cocktail Sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup catsup

6 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon horseradish

3 drops tabasco sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon celery salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

Blend all ingredients and chill. Serves 6.

## CLAM AND CHEESE DIP

1 7-ounce can minced clams

2 3-ounce packages cream cheese

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons grated onion

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

3 drops tabasco sauce

2 teaspoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon chopped parsley

Potato chips

Drain clams and save liquor. Soften cheese at room temperature. Combine all ingredients except potato chips and liquor; blend into a paste. Gradually add about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup clam liquor and beat until consistency of whipped cream. Chill. Serve in a bowl surrounded by potato chips. Makes about 1 pint dip.



Clams on the Half Shell



## BROILED CLAM CANAPES

- 1 7-ounce can minced clams
- 1 3-ounce package chive cream cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 drops tabasco sauce
- 1 egg white
- Crackers or toast
- Paprika

Drain clams. Soften cheese at room temperature. Combine cheese, seasonings, and clams. Fold into stiffly beaten egg white. Spread on crackers or toast. Sprinkle with paprika. Place on broiler pan about 3 inches from source of heat. Broil 2 to 3 minutes or until brown. Serve at once. Makes approximately 36 canapés.

## STEAMED CLAMS

- 6 pounds shell clams ("steamers")
- ½ cup boiling water
- Butter or margarine

Wash clams thoroughly. Place in a steamer, add water, and cover. Steam for 5 to 10 minutes or until clams open. Serve hot in the shell with melted butter. Serves 6.

## ROAST CLAMS

- 6 pounds shell clams
- Butter or margarine

Wash clams thoroughly. Place in a baking pan. Roast in a very hot oven, 450° F., for 15 minutes or until clams open. Serve hot in the shell with melted butter. Serves 6.

## CLAM POTATO SALAD

- 1 pint clams
- 2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted
- 1 cup diced cooked potatoes
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped pimiento
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- ¼ teaspoon thyme
- ½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- Lettuce

Drain clams; cook in butter until edges curl. Chop. Combine all ingredients except lettuce. Chill. Serve on lettuce. Serves 6.

## MOLDED CLAM SALAD

- 2 7-ounce cans minced clams
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ¼ cup cold water
- ¾ cup clam liquor and water
- ½ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- ½ cup cream
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 3 drops tabasco sauce
- 1 teaspoon horseradish
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped pimiento
- 1 cup cooked peas
- Salad greens

Drain clams and save liquor. Soften gelatin in cold water for 5 minutes. Heat liquor; add gelatin and stir until dissolved. Add next 7 ingredients. Chill until almost congealed. Fold in egg, pimiento, peas, and clams. Place in a 1-quart mold; chill until firm. Unmold on salad greens. Serves 6.

## MANHATTAN CLAM CHOWDER

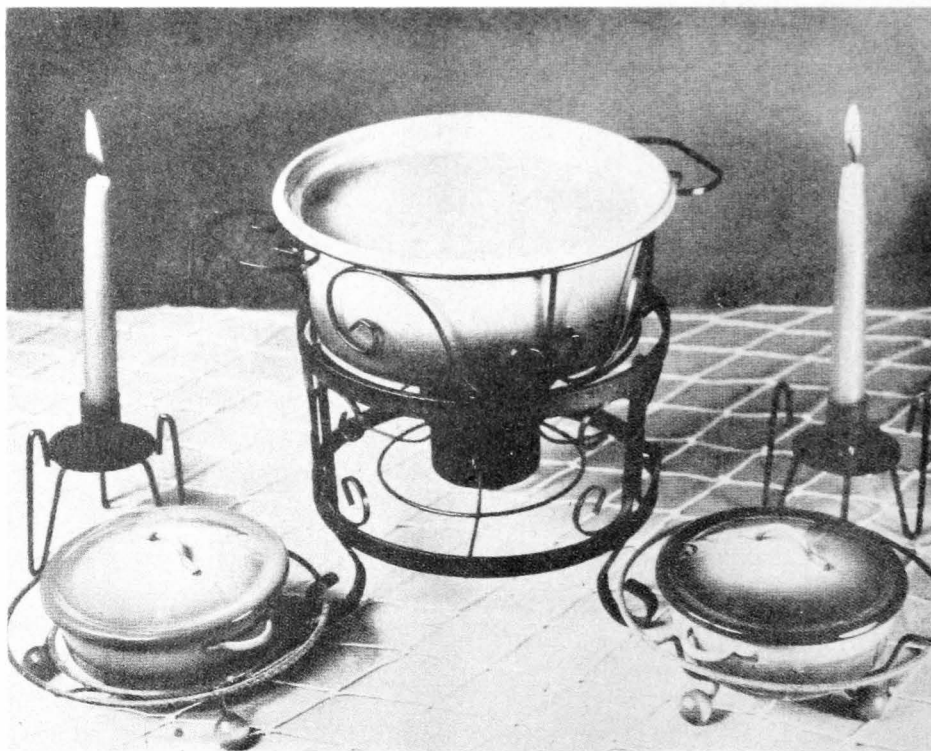
1 pint clams  
¼ cup chopped bacon or salt pork  
½ cup chopped onion  
½ cup chopped green pepper  
1 cup chopped celery  
1 cup clam liquor and water  
1 cup diced potatoes  
¼ teaspoon thyme  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dash cayenne  
2 cups tomato juice

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Fry bacon until lightly brown. Add onion, green pepper, and celery; cook until tender. Add liquor, potatoes, seasonings, and clams. Cook about 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add tomato juice; heat. Serves 6.

## NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER

1 pint clams  
¼ cup chopped bacon or salt pork  
¼ cup chopped onion  
1 cup clam liquor and water  
1 cup diced potatoes  
½ teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
2 cups milk  
Parsley

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Fry bacon until lightly brown. Add onion and cook until tender. Add liquor, potatoes, seasonings, and clams. Cook about 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add milk; heat. Garnish with chopped parsley sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.



Clam Chowder

## CLAM AND CORN CHOWDER

- 1 pint clams
- ¼ cup chopped bacon
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup clam liquor and water
- 1 cup diced potatoes
- 1 teaspoon celery salt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- 1 cup whole-kernel corn
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon butter or other fat
- ⅓ cup cracker crumbs

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Fry bacon until crisp; drain on absorbent paper. Cook onion in fat until tender. Add liquor, potatoes, seasonings, and clams. Cook about 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add corn, milk, and butter; heat. Stir in crumbs. Garnish with bacon sprinkled over the top. Serves 6.

## CLAM FRITTERS

- 1 pint clams
- 1¾ cups sifted flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons grated onion
- 1 tablespoon butter or other fat, melted

Drain clams and chop. Sift dry ingredients together. Combine egg, milk, onion, butter, and clams. Pour into dry ingredients and stir until smooth. Drop batter by teaspoonfuls into hot fat, 350° F., and fry about 3 minutes or until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper. Serves 6.

## FRIED CLAMS

- 1 quart clams
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- 1 cup dry bread crumbs or cracker crumbs

Drain clams. Combine egg, milk, and seasonings. Dip clams in egg mixture and roll in crumbs. Place clams in a heavy frying pan which contains about one-eighth inch of fat, hot but not smoking. Fry at moderate heat. When clams are brown on one side, turn carefully and brown the other side. Cooking time approximately 5 to 8 minutes. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

NOTE.—A commercial breading may be used. Follow the directions on the package.

## DEEP-FAT FRIED CLAMS

- 1 quart clams
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- 1 cup dry bread crumbs or cracker crumbs

Drain clams. Combine egg, milk, and seasonings. Dip clams in egg mixture and roll in crumbs. Fry in a basket in deep fat, 375° F., for 2 to 3 minutes or until brown. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

NOTE.—A commercial breading may be used. Follow the directions on the package.

## STUFFED CLAMS

1 dozen large shell clams ("chowders")  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
1 4-ounce can mushrooms, drained and chopped  
1/4 cup butter or other fat, melted  
3 tablespoons flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted  
1/2 cup dry bread crumbs

Shuck clams (p. 3). Chop. Wash shells thoroughly. Cook onion and mushrooms in butter until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings. Add clams and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Fill well-greased clam shells. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over top of each shell. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 10 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

## CLAM POULETTE

2 7-ounce cans minced clams  
1/4 cup butter or other fat  
1/4 cup flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg  
2 cups clam liquor and milk  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
1 egg yolk, beaten  
12 toast cups

Drain clams and save liquor. Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Gradually add liquor and lemon juice; cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into egg, add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add clams; heat. Serve in toast cups. Serves 6.



Stuffed Clams

## DEVEILED CLAMS

1 pint clams  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons chopped onion  
½ cup chopped celery  
¼ cup butter or other fat, melted  
1 tablespoon flour  
¾ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
¼ teaspoon thyme  
3 drops tabasco sauce  
1 tablespoon chili sauce  
1 egg, beaten  
½ cup cracker meal  
2 tablespoons chopped parsley  
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted  
½ cup dry bread crumbs

Drain and chop clams. Cook garlic, onion, and celery in butter until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings. Add clams and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into egg, add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add meal and parsley. Fill 6 well-greased individual shells or casseroles. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over top of each shell. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 10 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

## SCALLOPED CLAMS

1 pint clams  
2 cups cracker crumbs  
½ teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
½ cup butter or other fat, melted  
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 cup clam liquor and milk

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Combine crumbs, salt, pepper, and butter. Sprinkle one-third in a well-greased 1-quart casserole; cover with one-half the clams. Repeat layers. Add Worcestershire sauce to liquor and pour over the casserole. Sprinkle remaining crumbs over top. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 30 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

## CLAM AU GRATIN

1 pint clams  
1¼ cups clam liquor and milk  
¼ cup butter or other fat  
1 cup cooked elbow macaroni  
1 cup soft bread crumbs  
1 cup grated cheddar cheese  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
3 eggs, beaten

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Scald liquor; add butter, macaroni, crumbs, cheese, seasonings, and clams; mix well. Blend in egg. Place in a well-greased 1-quart casserole. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., about 45 minutes or until firm. Serves 6.

## CLAM SOUFFLE

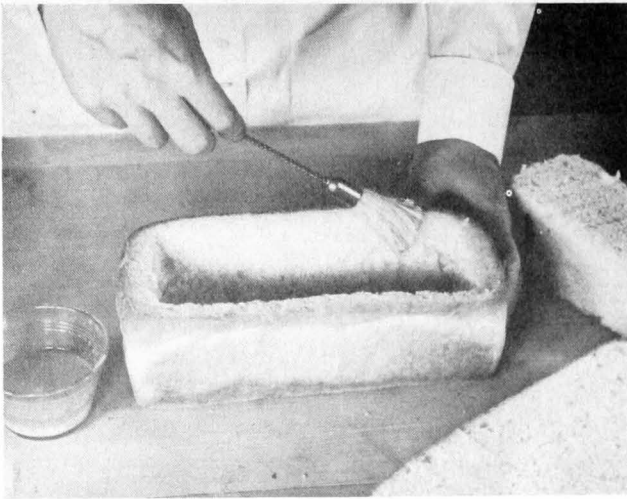
1 pint clams  
3 tablespoons butter or other fat  
3 tablespoons flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
Dash nutmeg  
1 cup clam liquor and water  
3 eggs, separated

Simmer clams in their own liquor about 5 minutes, or until edges curl. Drain and save liquor. Chop. Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Gradually add liquor and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into beaten egg yolk; add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add clams. Fold in stiffly beaten egg white. Pour into a well-greased 1-quart casserole. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 45 minutes. Serve immediately, plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.

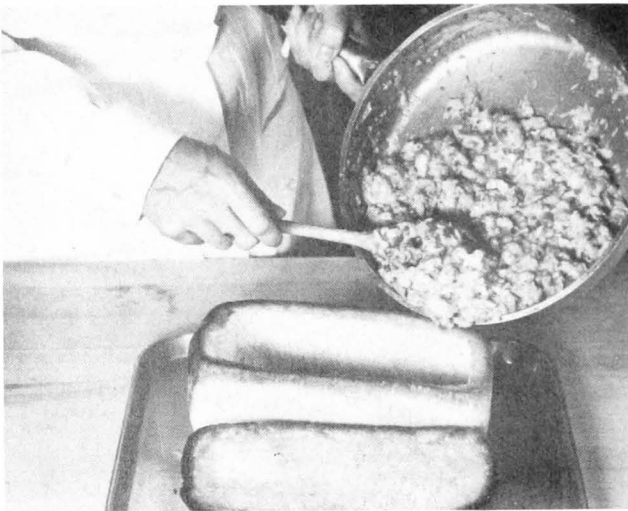
## DEVILED CLAM LOAF

- 1 quart clams
- 1 1-pound loaf unsliced bread
- ¼ cup butter or other fat, melted
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ¼ cup butter or other fat, melted
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon thyme
- 3 drops tabasco sauce
- 1 tablespoon chili sauce
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 quart soft bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

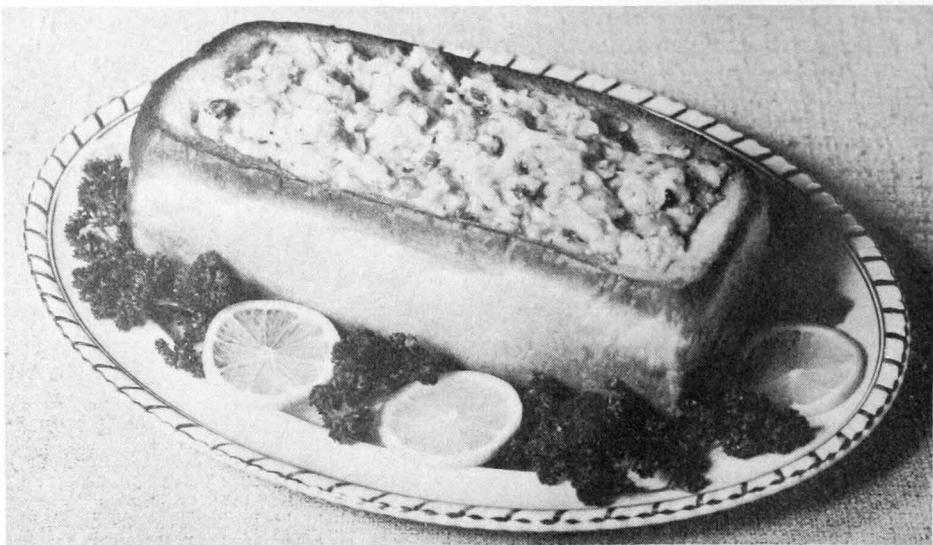
Drain and chop clams. Cut top from bread and hollow out loaf leaving a 1-inch shell. Brush inside with butter. Toast in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 10 minutes. Cook garlic, onion, and celery in butter until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings. Add clams and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into egg, add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add crumbs and parsley. Place mixture in toasted loaf. Cover with top crust and bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 1 hour. Serve plain or with a sauce. Serves 6.



Brushing loaf with butter



Filling loaf



Deviled Clam Loaf

## CLAM LOAF WITH EGG SAUCE

1 pint clams  
3 tablespoons chopped bacon  
¼ cup chopped onion  
3 cups soft bread cubes  
¾ cup clam liquor and milk  
3 eggs, beaten  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Fry bacon until lightly brown; add onion and cook until tender. Combine with cubes and clams. Place in a well-greased loaf pan, 9½ x 5¼ x 2¾ inches. Combine liquor, egg, and seasonings; pour over loaf. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 1 hour or until firm. Unmold and serve with an egg sauce. Serves 6.

### Egg Sauce

¼ cup butter or other fat  
¼ cup flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
2 cups milk  
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped  
2 teaspoons chopped parsley  
2 teaspoons lemon juice

Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Gradually add milk and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add remaining ingredients; heat. Serves 6.

## BAKED CLAM HASH

1 quart clams  
⅓ cup chopped bacon  
½ cup chopped onion  
1 quart diced cooked potatoes  
¼ cup chopped parsley  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 teaspoons salt  
Dash pepper  
Paprika

Drain and chop clams. Fry bacon until crisp; drain on absorbent paper. Cook onion in fat until tender. Add clams and cook 5 minutes or until heated through. Combine all ingredients except bacon and paprika. Place in a well-greased baking pan, 11 x 7 x 1½ inches, sprinkle with paprika. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 30 to 35 minutes. Garnish with bacon. Serves 6.

## CLAM PIE

2 7-ounce cans minced clams  
1 cup chopped onion  
¼ cup butter or other fat, melted  
¼ cup flour  
Dash pepper  
2 cups clam liquor and water  
½ cup diced cooked carrots  
½ cup chopped cooked celery  
3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped  
1½ cups seasoned mashed potatoes

Drain clams and save liquor. Cook onion in butter until tender. Blend in flour and pepper; add liquor and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Add carrots, celery, egg, and clams. Place in a well-greased 1½-quart casserole. Cover with potatoes. Bake in a hot oven, 425° F., for 20 to 25 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

## SOUR CREAM CLAM PIE

2 7-ounce cans small whole clams  
⅓ cup chopped bacon  
¾ cup chopped onion  
¼ cup flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 cups biscuit mix  
1 cup sour cream  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Paprika

Fry bacon until lightly brown. Add onion and cook until tender. Blend in flour and seasonings; add clams and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Stir a little of the hot sauce into egg, add to remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Prepare biscuit mix as directed. Roll and line a 9-inch pie pan. Place clam filling in shell. Combine sour cream and salt; spread on top. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 25 to 30 minutes. Serves 6.

## CLAM AND SPAGHETTI CASSEROLE

2 7-ounce cans minced clams  
2 tablespoons butter or other fat  
2 tablespoons flour  
Dash pepper  
1 10½-ounce can condensed mushroom soup  
¼ cup milk  
1 8-ounce package spaghetti  
2 tablespoons butter or other fat, melted  
½ cup dry bread crumbs

Melt butter; blend in flour and pepper. Add soup, milk, and clams; cook until thick, stirring constantly. Cook spaghetti as directed; drain. Combine with sauce. Place in a well-greased 1½-quart casserole. Combine butter and crumbs; sprinkle over casserole. Bake in a hot oven, 400° F., for 10 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.

## CLAM AND POTATO CASSEROLE

1 quart clams  
¼ cup butter or other fat  
¼ cup flour  
1¼ teaspoons salt  
Dash pepper  
¼ teaspoon curry powder  
1½ cups clam liquor and milk  
1¼ quarts sliced cooked potatoes  
¾ cup chopped onion  
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese  
Paprika

Drain clams and save liquor. Chop. Melt butter; blend in flour and seasonings. Add liquor gradually and cook until thick and smooth, stirring constantly. Add clams. Place one-half the potatoes in a well-greased 2-quart casserole, sprinkle one-half the onion over potatoes, and cover with one-half the sauce. Repeat. Sprinkle with cheese and paprika. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F., for 45 to 50 minutes or until brown. Serves 6.



Clam and Spaghetti Casserole



## CLAM SAUCE FOR NOODLES

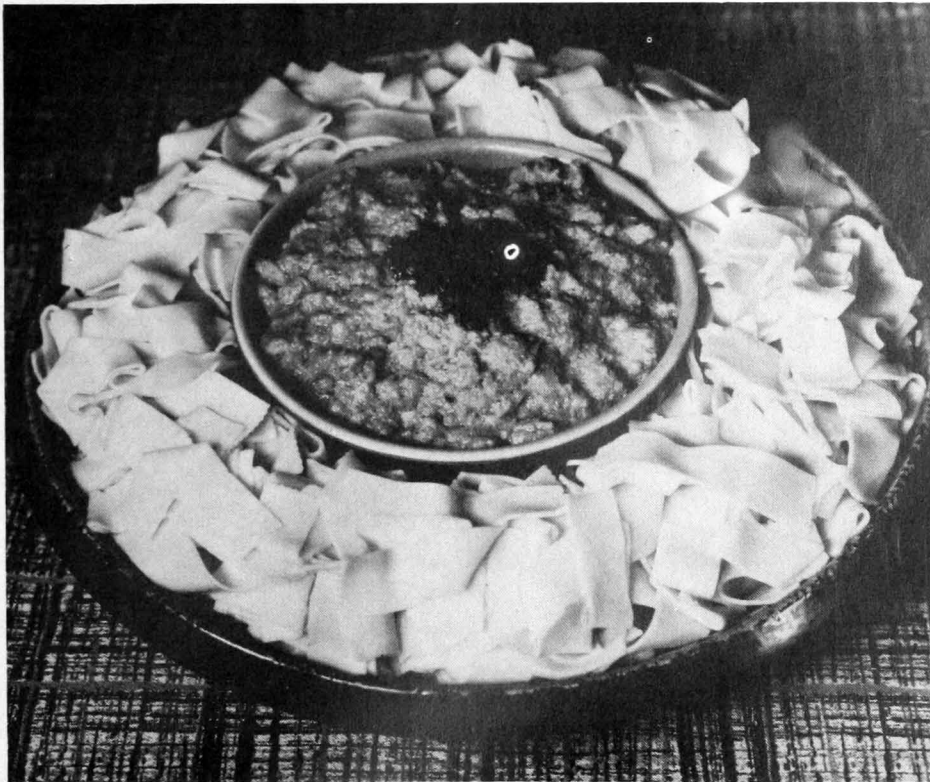
2 7-ounce cans small whole clams  
½ cup butter or other fat  
½ cup clam liquor and milk  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
¼ teaspoon paprika  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
2 egg yolks, beaten  
1 8-ounce package noodles

Drain clams and save liquor. Melt butter; add liquor and seasonings. Heat. Stir a little of the hot liquid into the egg, add to remaining liquid, stirring constantly. Add clams; heat. Cook noodles as directed on package. Serve clam sauce in a bowl surrounded by noodles. Serves 6.

## CLAM AND HAM SCRAMBLE

1 pint clams  
1 cup diced ham  
5 eggs, beaten  
¼ cup milk  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
6 slices buttered toast  
¼ cup grated cheese  
¼ cup chopped parsley

Drain and chop clams. Fry ham 10 minutes or until brown. Add clams and cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Combine egg, milk, and seasonings. Add to clam mixture and cook over low heat constantly stirring and scraping from bottom and sides of pan until creamy consistency. Serve on toast; sprinkle with cheese and parsley. Serve at once. Serves 6.



Clam Sauce for Noodles