

Our State eats

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Clam Chowder

Yield: 6 servings.

- 5 dozen littleneck or cherrystone clams, scrubbed, or 3 (6.5-ounce) cans minced clams, drained and liquid reserved**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 cup onion, minced**
- 3 stalks celery, diced**
- 2 cups potatoes, peeled and cubed**
- 1 cup carrots, diced**
- 1 bay leaf**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 quart half-and-half**
- 8 ounces or 1 cup clam juice or reserved stock**
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt**
- Black pepper to taste**

If using fresh clams, place clams and 1 cup of water in a large pot. Cover and cook over high heat for 6 to 7 minutes. Uncover and remove all open clams. Cover and continue cooking unopened clams for 2 to 3 more minutes. Remove pot from heat and discard any unopened clams. Strain the liquid through a fine-mesh sieve lined with a coffee filter or cheesecloth. Reserve liquid. Coarsely chop clams and set aside.

In a large pot, warm olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, celery, potatoes, carrots, and bay leaf. Add water to cover and cook over medium heat until vegetables are tender.

Meanwhile, in a large, heavy saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour until smooth. Whisk in half-and-half and stir constantly until thick and smooth. Pour mixture into pot with vegetables, stirring constantly. Add clam juice. Heat through, but do not boil.

Stir in clams just before serving. When clams are heated through, stir in hot sauce and season with salt and pepper.

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