



GEORGIA CLAMS

Clams harvested in Georgia are called northern quahogs or hard clams. The scientific name is *Mercenaria mercenaria*. They are sold in markets under a variety of names according to size. From the smallest to largest size, they may be called pasta clam, littleneck, topneck, cherrystone or chowder clams. Georgia clams are available year-round. The price per clam generally decreases as the clam size increases. A general rule of thumb is the larger the clam, the tougher the meat.

Littlenecks and topnecks can be used in a variety of recipes, eaten raw or eaten as a steamed product. Cherrystones may be used for steamers, stuffed or fried clams, while chowders are used in soups. Chowders are generally too tough to eat raw, so they are mainly used as a minced clam product or for making chowder. The easiest way to open large clams is by freezing them for 24 hours.

When buying clams, look for shellfish tags on sacks or containers. These tags (which list the harvester or dealer certification number, harvest area and date) signify that the clams have been harvested and handled according to national and state shellfish safety standards.

Clams are usually purchased live in the shell and must be refrigerated. They can be kept for several days to weeks or can be frozen. Live clams should not be stored on ice or in an air-tight container while refrigerated, but held in a bowl. Clams with broken or cracked shells should be discarded. If shells are open and do not close when lightly tapped, then the clam is dead and should not be eaten. If the shells close, the clam is still alive and okay to eat.

In addition to being delicious, clams are a low fat/high protein food and naturally low in carbohydrates. A cooked 3-oz serving (about 12 small) has 110 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 17 grams protein, and only 6 grams carbs. Clams are also a good source of iron, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids and have six times the recommended daily intake of vitamin B-12.

Recipes

STEAMED CLAMS

Scrub littlenecks and topnecks with brush to remove sand, mud or surface dirt. Cover bottom of deep pot with clams. Add water to level of clams (about 1 cup) and cover pot with a lid that fits tightly. Place on low heat and cook until shells open, about 10–15 minutes. Remove from heat as soon as they open. Clams get tougher the longer they cook. Allow to cool for 1 minute. Remove clams from shell with fork and eat or dip in butter, garlic butter or favorite dip.

CLAMS OREGANATE 1 main dish or 3 appetizers

Recipe from The Encyclopedia of Fish Cookery

12 littlenecks
6 garlic cloves, pureed or minced
1 tablespoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
1/2 cup fine dry bread crumbs
1 tablespoon olive oil

Open clams, leaving each one on the half shell. Arrange in a shallow pan. Mix garlic, herbs and crumbs, and divide among the clams. Dribble a few drops of olive oil on each clam. Bake in a preheated 400°F oven for 8 to 10 minutes, or in a broiler until brown.

ROASTED CLAMS

Recipe from Shellfish Recipes of the Shore

8 littlenecks or topnecks per person
butter, melted
Lemon juice

Preheat oven to 450°F. Wash clams and place in shallow baking pan. Bake for 15 minutes or until shells open. Serve in shell with butter spiked with lemon juice.

WHITE CLAM SAUCE serves 4

Recipe from Shellfish Recipes of the Shore

36 topnecks or cherrystones
2 sticks butter or margarine
4 gloves of garlic, minced
1 cup parsley

Wash clams and place in deep pot with 1/4 cup water. Cover and bring to boil. Simmer for 10–15 minutes until shell opens. Stir once so upper clams get to bottom. Remove clams and chop. Save 1 cup of broth. In saucepan, melt butter and add garlic and parsley. Then add chopped clams and broth. Heat until just hot. (Further cooking will toughen clams). Serve over spaghetti.

SPAGHETTI WITH CLAM SAUCE serves 4

Recipes from Alan Hart of Valona

1 1/2 cup minced cherrystones or topnecks
1/4 pound butter, one stick
1/3 cup olive oil
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
1 teaspoon oregano
2 tablespoons basil
3 garlic gloves
1 cup clam juice
salt to taste
1 pound spaghetti
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons parsley

Melt butter in a skillet and add olive oil, pepper, oregano, basil, garlic, clams and clam juice. Simmer for 30 minutes. Add salt to taste. Warm a large bowl while this is cooking. Drain spaghetti and place in warmed bowl and pour the clam sauce over it. Toss with the cheese and parsley and serve immediately.

FRIED CLAM STRIPS serves 4

Recipes from Alan Hart of Valona

12-24 cherrystone clams
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
2 cups Italian bread crumbs
2 or 3 cups vegetable oil

Open clams and cut into strips. Beat eggs and milk together in a bowl. Put bread crumbs in a separate bowl. Heat oil to 375°F. Dip clam strips in egg and milk, then in bread crumbs. Cook in oil until light brown. Serve with tartar sauce or lemon juice.

CLAM CHOWDER serves 6 to 8

Recipe from The Encyclopedia of Fish Cookery

4 dozen chowders
5 cups cold water
2 inch cube of salt pork, diced
1 large onion chopped fine
4 medium-size potatoes, diced
salt and pepper
2 cups milk, hot
1 1/2 cups heavy cream, hot

Wash clams thoroughly. Place in bottom of deep pan with 5 cups of cold water. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer just until the shells open. Strain the broth through cheesecloth and save. Remove the clams from their shells and chop into small pieces. Combine the salt pork and onion in a saucepan, and cook gently over low heat for about 3 minutes; do not brown. Add broth and the potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook until potatoes are tender. Add clams. Remove from heat and slowly add heated milk and cream. Serve immediately.

QUICK AND EASY CLAM AND SPAGHETTI serves 4

Recipe from Shellfish Recipes of the Shore

36 littlenecks or topnecks
1 32 oz jar of favorite spaghetti sauce

Scrub clams and place in large shallow pan. Pour sauce over clams and cover pan with aluminum foil. Cook 20 minutes. Spoon over spaghetti shell and all.

CLAM FRITTERS serves 4

Recipe from The Good Housekeeping Cookbook

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
1 teaspoon sugar
2 dozen cherrystones
2 eggs
1 teaspoon grated onion
salad oil

In medium bowl, combine flour with baking powder, sugar and salt. Shuck clams keeping 1/2 cup clam liquid; coarsely chop clams (should yield about 1 1/4 cups). In second bowl, combine clams, eggs, onion and clam liquid; beat with fork until mixed. Stir clam mixture into flour mixture until both are well mixed. In 12-inch skillet over medium heat, in 1 tablespoon hot salad oil, drop some clam mixture by teaspoonfuls. Cook several fritters at a time until golden on both sides turning only once. Place on warm platter and keep warm while cooking remaining fritters. Add more salad oil to skillet as needed.



Marine Extension and
Georgia Sea Grant
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



FOR MORE INFORMATION: GeorgiaSeafood.org