



GEORGIA OYSTERS

TASTE: The Georgia oyster (*Crassostrea virginicus*) is famous for its briny yet sweet taste. Once you've tasted one, other oysters pale in comparison. These delectable creatures hold a unique place in our state's history, but seem to be our current best-kept secret.

HABITAT: The world renowned estuaries along the Georgia coast, composed of nutrient-rich marsh, create the perfect environment for cultivation. Our oysters grow in clean waters that meet standards set by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, as verified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

SEASON: Oysters can be harvested commercially and recreationally only from approved waters October through May. For added safety and quality, Georgia oystermen delay harvest June through September when spawning oysters lose their plumpness and hot weather encourages higher levels of naturally occurring bacteria in coastal waters. Wild Georgia oysters grow clustered together – a perfect match for oyster roasts.

NUTRITION: Oysters are low in fat and carbohydrates. A 3-oz cooked serving (about 12 medium) contains 90 calories, 3 grams or 4% of the daily value (DV) of fat and only 5 grams (2% DV) of carbs. In addition, oysters are a source of iron (44% DV) and an extraordinary source of Zinc and Vitamin B-12, yielding 600% DV in one serving! One serving also provides 530 mg of omega-3 fatty acids. (Health organizations suggest an intake of at least 250 to 500 mg per day to prevent heart attacks and strokes). However, oysters also contain 65 mg/22% DV cholesterol, so people who need to limit their dietary cholesterol should consume oysters in moderation. (Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.)

THE HATCHERY: Our Shellfish Research Lab is collaborating with Georgia oystermen to cultivate single oysters which are larger, more attractive and desirable for the half-shell market, mainly in restaurants. In addition, we opened an oyster hatchery in 2015 which will enable Georgia oystermen to produce more single oysters and compete with other Southeastern states.

Recipes

OYSTERS SUNBURY serves 6

Recipe from Jackie Ogden, UGA Extension FACS Agent

- 1 dozen oysters on half shell
- Salt and pepper
- 6 teaspoons horseradish
- 1 cup cracker crumbs mixed with 1 tablespoon melted butter

Sprinkle oysters with salt and pepper. Spread 1/2 teaspoon horseradish over each oyster then top with layer of crumbs and butter mix. Broil 5 minutes or until browned.

OYSTER-ONION SHORTBREAD

1 main dish 3 appetizers

Recipe from Mississippi Oyster Recipes, developed by MS State University and MS Dept. of Marine Resources, 2004

- 1 can creamed corn
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 package "Jiffy" brand corn muffin mix
- 1 egg slightly beaten
- Tabasco or other hot sauce, to taste
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- 5 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 12-15 well-drained oysters
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- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 8 oz. grated sharp cheddar cheese

Combine first five ingredients. Put in buttered 10" iron or ovenproof skillet. In another, pan sauté onions in butter until tender and add oysters. Simmer until edges curl. Drain well. Mix sour cream, dill, salt, and 1/2 of cheese in medium bowl; fold in sautéed oysters and onions into sour cream/cheese mixture. Spoon this on top of the mixture in the skillet. Bake at 435° F for 30-45 minutes. Let stand for 5-10 minutes, then serve hot.

OYSTER AND TOMATO CASSEROLE

Recipe from Georgia Sea Grant "Seafood is Special" extension bulletin, 1979

- 1/4 lb. butter (1 stick), melted in pan
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, pressed
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 heaping teaspoon flour
- 1 can tomatoes (11 oz.), drained and chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 med. can sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 qt. shucked oysters, drained
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs

Sauté onion, garlic, and celery in melted butter. Blend in flour and stir in tomatoes. Add salt, pepper to taste, then Worcestershire, mushrooms and drained oysters. Pour into casserole dish, top with bread crumbs, dot with butter and bake at 350°F until hot and bubbly. Serve with hot, fluffy rice.

OYSTER STEW

makes about 6 cups
Recipe from Georgia Sea Grant "Seafood is Special" extension bulletin, 1979

1 pt. shucked raw oysters
1 quart milk
2 tablespoons butter
dash hot sauce
salt and pepper to taste

Pour oysters and juice into a 2-quart saucepan. Cook over medium heat until oysters plump and edges curl. Add milk and butter, season, and heat through, but do not boil.

OYSTER STEW VARIATION

makes about 6 cups
Recipe from Georgia Sea Grant "Seafood is Special" extension bulletin, 1979

3 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon flour
salt and pepper to taste
1 quart milk
1 pt. shucked raw oysters with juice
chopped chives or chopped celery leaves

Melt butter in 2-quart saucepan, add flour and cook until frothy. Add seasoning to taste. Blend in milk and heat mixture through, but do not boil. Add oysters and juice and cook gently until edges curl. Serve topped with chives or celery leaves.

OVEN ROASTED OYSTERS

Serves 3-4 as main dish and 6-8 if oysters are served with other food

Recipe from UGA Marine Educator John Crawford

1 bushel clumped oysters
Newspapers (on which to drain washed oysters)
Large cooking pan
Cocktail sauce or other dipping sauce of your choice
Bucket (optional, for spent oyster shells)

Buy local oysters or harvest from an approved recreational site. Locations to legally harvest oysters are on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources webpage.

Thoroughly wash oysters with potable or tap water to remove mud; place on newspapers to drain. Pre-heat oven to 450°F. Mound as many oysters as will fit on baking pan. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until oyster shells pop open. Shells that do not open may still be raw. Return to oven until they open. Serve with sauces.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: GeorgiaSeafood.org

If your immune system is weakened from chronic medical conditions or treatments, please visit SafeOysters.org before eating raw oysters.



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