



Menu du Jour

14 Aug 2004

Boiled Maine Lobsters
Sweet Corn on the Cob
Drawn Butter
Boiled Red Bliss Potatoes



Boiled Maine Lobster

Unlike its California and Florida cousins, a Maine (or Atlantic) lobster has two claws – a pincher or seizer and a crusher – that both contain sweet, flavorful meat. While the Spiny lobster native to southern California, Florida and the Caribbean has a larger tale with more tail meat than the Maine lobster, some say the Spiny lobster's meat is stringier and much less flavorful than the Atlantic lobster.

If you're fortunate, you'll get a lobster with the green tomalley (actually the liver) and the coral red roe (if the lobster's a female); both are considered by many to be the tastiest parts.

Always purchase lobsters directly from the boat or at a local fishmonger. (Lobsters are also available by overnight shipping from several Maine-based lobstermen.) High-volume supermarket chains negotiate lower prices from their lobster suppliers who often provide lower quality



lobsters. Supermarkets also have large holding tanks to store lobsters. The longer storage lowers the meat content and quality. Generally, supermarket lobsters are no where near as tasty and meaty as fresh lobsters.

During the summer months, lobsters molt or lose their shells in order to grow. These lobsters, known as soft-shell or shedders and often available at lower prices, have meat that is more watery than a hard shell lobster.

Lobsters are available in several sizes: Chicken or chix (less than 1.15 pounds), Quarters (1.17 to 1.3 pounds), X-Halves (1.32 to 1.5 pounds), Halves (1.52 to 1.65 pounds), Small Selects (1.67 to 1.96 pounds) and Premiums (1.98 to 2.2 pounds) being the most common.

4 (1 1/2- to 1 3/4-pound) hard shell Maine lobsters
4 tablespoons kosher salt
1 pound unsalted butter
2 lemons
4 ears sweet corn, shucked
12 Red Bliss potatoes, gourmet-size (#1)
Propane-fired burner (turkey fryer)
30-quart or larger stockpot with cover and strainer basket
Water

Clarify butter:

In a medium saucepan over low heat, slowly melt butter until it forms three layers: a white foam on the top, a golden layer of butterfat in the middle and another white layer of milk solids on the bottom. Carefully spoon the foam from the top of the liquid and discard. Carefully pour the clarified butter into another container leaving the milk solids in the saucepan. Keep the clarified butter warm. (This will keep, covered and refrigerated, for three weeks.)

A pound of unsalted butter will yield about 1 1/2 cups of clarified or drawn butter.

Prepare cooker:

Fill a large stockpot 2/3 full of cold water and bring to a rolling boil (depending on the heat of your cooker, this could take as long as 30 minutes). Add four tablespoons of coarse kosher salt. (If you live near the ocean, a couple of handfuls of rockweed would be a great addition.) Return water to a rolling boil.

Prepare recipe:

When the water comes to the second boil, add the potatoes, cover, and cook for three minutes. Add the corn and lobsters and cook for another 13 to 15 minutes (depending on the size of the lobsters). Drain well and serve.



Plate Presentation



Nice presentation, messy eating!



Cracked & ready to eat easily



Although a whole lobster accompanied with boiled potatoes and sweet corn makes a dramatic presentation, it is easier for your guests if you split the lobster, separate and crack the claws and drain any residual water from the lobsters before serving.

To do this hold the lobster over a large bowl or sink and firmly grasp the tail section. Twist it off and allow any water to drain from the tail and the body. Do the same with the two large claws. Then, using the back of a large chef's knife, give the claws a couple of whacks to crack the claws and twist off the knuckles. Slice the tail into two sections by running a knife through the underside of the tail. Remove the dark vein-like intestinal track that runs along the top of the shell.

Serve with clarified butter and lemon wedges.



Live lobsters ready for the cooker



Lobster cooker (aka turkey fryer)

From The Kitchen Of Michael H. Stines
www.CapeCodBBQ.com