

Florida Seafood at Your Fingertips: Live!

Angela Collins, FL Sea Grant Extension Agent, abcollins@ufl.edu

[Link to recording](#)

June 10, 2020

Cookout Clams

What you will need:

25 – 50 count littleneck/middleneck hard clams
2 – 4 cloves garlic, crushed or finely chopped
¼ cup olive oil
2 tbs. parmesan cheese
1 tbs. chopped fresh chives
Freshly ground black pepper
1 lemon, cut into slices for squeezing
Any crusty bread for dipping (such as French or Sourdough)

Difficulty of recipe: Simple

Total time to make: 20 minutes

Recipe instructions:

1. Prepare grill
2. Thoroughly rinse and inspect clams. All clams should be tightly closed and intact. Discard any broken or open clams. Always keep clams cool (in fridge or cooler) until ready to use.
3. Place clams in grill safe pan (or you can use sturdy foil if you don't have a pan)
4. Medium direct heat (you can use gas or charcoal grill)
5. Cook clams in a single layer until they open – they do not need to be turned.
6. While the clams are cooking, whisk together olive oil, chopped garlic, parmesan cheese and black pepper to taste in a small bowl. Distribute equally into 4 serving bowls and sprinkle with chopped chives.
7. Once almost all of the clams are open (about 9 – 10 minutes), remove pan from heat.

Florida Seafood at your Fingertips Species Profile:

Bivalve shellfish (e.g., clams and oysters) are a heart healthy food, and provide a nutrient rich, low-calorie meat option. They are an excellent source of protein and are high in iron, calcium and vitamin B.

Hard clams are harvested year round and are always available in steady supply. There are two commercially important varieties of hard clams harvested in Florida: the northern quahog (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) and the southern quahog (*Mercenaria campechiensis*).

Though some clams are still wild caught, most clams in Florida are commercially provided by shellfish farmers, who maintain aquaculture leases in coastal waters throughout the state.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services manages shellfish harvest areas, which are strictly monitored to ensure excellent water quality and growing conditions for this product. Clam farmers plant seed clams (about the size of a pea) under nets or in mesh bags to protect them from predators (everyone likes to eat clams!). In Florida's warm waters, clams will reach market size in about 12 to 18 months. Clams that are not harvested will keep growing, and may live for over 50 years!

Shellfish aquaculture is a growing industry and provides one of the greenest agricultural products around! Clams are filter feeders and siphon their food directly from the water column, consuming phytoplankton and nutrients needed to grow, so clam farmers don't need to feed their livestock at all. By their simple acts of eating and growing, bivalves remove nitrogen, sequester atmospheric carbon and increase water clarity. Clam farms are one of the greenest agricultural enterprises around, and have demonstrated environmental benefits.
<https://shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu/environmental-benefits/>

Where to buy: You can buy fresh, live clams at most grocery stores and seafood markets. For a list of local seafood retail markets near you, check out the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Buy-Fresh-From-Florida/Seafood-Retail-Markets>.

How to catch: Shellfish harvesting areas are opened and closed in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Guidelines, and the open or closed status applies to both recreational and commercial harvest. For more information on recreational harvest, check out <https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/shellfish/>.

Sustainability: Farmed hard clams from the US are one of the most sustainable, environmentally friendly seafood choices on the market, and are considered a "best choice."
<https://www.seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations/groups/clams>

Seafood cost: Moderate

Final Talking Point(s): Clam farming has little negative impact on the environment but plenty of positive impact on local economies. The industry provides hundreds of jobs for residents of coastal communities. Locally farmed clams (and oysters) can be found across the state. The health benefits of seafood consumption are well documented (so Eat Seafood, America!), and supporting local seafood production, including shellfish aquaculture, is great way to benefit your health and coastal economies. Request Fresh from Florida products from your favorite seafood supplier!

Florida Sea Grant plug: consistent message at the end of each presentation – suggest we all end with the same formatted slide and/or image with link to our webpage.