

How To Make Perfect Clams

Clam Facts

Live clams are highly perishable and susceptible to bacterial contamination once they die or get too warm. Clams must be kept alive until ready to be cooked and eaten.

Storage

Store live clams in a cold (32 to 35-degree Fahrenheit) refrigerator in an open container, covered with a moist cloth or paper towels. Do not put live clams in an airtight cooler, bag, or submerge them in fresh water; either will kill them. Check daily for any open shells. If a clam is opened, to see if it has died, tap it on the counter. If it closes up after one minute the clam is still good. Remove any open clams that do not close up and discard. Clams must be used within two days from pick up.

Cleaning

Soak your clams for 20 minutes in fresh ice cold water just before cooking. As the clams breathe, they filter water. When the fresh water is filtered, the clam pushes saltwater and sand out of their shells.

Cooking

Clams are done when they open up, so whether you are steaming, grilling or baking it is easy to know when they are ready to eat. Plan on one to two dozen per person. This is usually a good gauge for estimating how many clams you need to buy.

Leftover Clam Storage

Unused cooked clams can be frozen and used later. Take meat out of the shell and place in a freezer safe container. Best to freeze the same day as cooked.

Littleneck Clams

The smallest clams are called littlenecks, amounting to 10-12 clams per pound. The most popular way to cook clams in our area is steaming, but they are often served raw on the half shell with cocktail sauce or even grilled with a squeeze of lemon and some melted butter.

