

New England Clam Chowder

Ingredients

- 1½ lb clams (with shells or clam meat)
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms (optional)
- 2–3 slices bacon (optional)
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour (optional)
- 1½ cups clam juice or reserved clam liquid
- 1½ cups whole milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

1. If using bacon, cook it first in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, remove the bacon, and use a small portion of the rendered fat, adding butter as needed; if not using bacon, melt the butter, then cook the onion, celery, and carrot until softened and fragrant without browning.
2. Add mushrooms if using and cook until softened and moisture is released.
3. Sprinkle flour over vegetables if using and cook while stirring for 1–2 minutes to remove raw flour taste.
4. Slowly stir in clam juice, milk, and cream until fully combined and smooth.
5. Add potatoes and bay leaf and simmer gently until potatoes are tender but still hold their shape.
6. Stir in clams and cook just until heated through, then season with salt and black pepper and remove bay leaf before serving.

Note & Storage

- Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
- Reheat slowly over low heat and avoid boiling to prevent dairy separation.
- Add a splash of milk or clam juice if chowder thickens during storage.
- Use gentle heat while cooking to keep clams tender and broth smooth.
- Mushrooms add savory depth but can be omitted for a more traditional flavor.