

FLORENCE FABRICANT

The LADIES' VILLAGE
IMPROVEMENT
SOCIETY COOKBOOK

Eating and Entertaining in East Hampton

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUG YOUNG
FOREWORD BY MARTHA STEWART





Baked Clams

LAWRENCE WALLACE, INLET SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

10 CHERRYSTONE CLAMS, WELL SCRUBBED
2/3 CUP DRY WHITE WINE
3 STRIPS BACON, PREFERABLY APPLEWOOD SMOKED
1 SMALL SHALLOT, MINCED
1 1/2 TEASPOONS FINELY MINCED FRESH FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY LEAVES
1 TEASPOON MINCED FRESH THYME LEAVES
1 TEASPOON MINCED FRESH OREGANO LEAVES
2 TABLESPOONS UNSALTED BUTTER, MELTED
1 1/2 TEASPOONS LEMON JUICE
1 CUP PLAIN PANKO BREAD CRUMBS
LEMON WEDGES FOR SERVING

Place the clams in a heavy 3 quart saucepan with 1/3 cup of the wine. Cover and cook over medium heat until the clams open, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the clams to a bowl and set them aside until they are cool enough to handle. Strain the clam juice through a fine sieve and reserve.

Meanwhile, fry the bacon until lightly browned. Place on paper towels to drain. Add the shallot to the bacon fat and sauté over medium heat until the shallot is translucent, about two to three minutes. Add the remaining 1/3 cup wine, increase the heat to medium-high, and reduce the liquid until it just films the pan. Stir in the parsley, thyme, oregano, and reserved clam juice. Remove from the heat. Stir in the melted butter, lemon juice, and panko.

Shuck the clams, reserving 12 of the half shells. Chop the clams and bacon together, preferably by hand. Fold the clams and bacon into the bread crumb mixture. Pack the mixture into the 12 half shells. Cover and set aside until shortly before serving.

Preheat the broiler.

Line a baking sheet with foil and place the clams on it. Place under the broiler at a distance of about 6 inches and broil until the clams are nicely browned, about 3 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.

Named according to size—from the smallest littlenecks to the next topnecks, then cherrystones, and finally quahogs or chowder clams, hard-shelled clams are a seaside pride and joy. Diggers, both commercial and amateur, regularly gather them to delight aficionados at raw bars, with pasta, in chowders and pies, and, like the ones in this recipe, baked in their shells. This dish comes from a restaurant that is run by Chef Larry Wallace and frequented by fishermen, baymen, and their families, and is about as far east, just shy of Montauk Point, as you can go.

SERVES 4

IMPROVEMENT: One of my proudest accomplishments has been mastering the art of opening clams (and oysters). The best way to learn is to watch a professional shucker who is willing to do it slowly for you to observe the technique; written instructions do not do the task justice. Use the humblest, plainest, least gimmicky clam knife you can buy.