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COASTAL LIVING

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From the Chesapeake Bay to the Carolinas,
this region's seafood traditions pay homage to blue crab,
oysters, and clams.

mid-atlantic seafood

mouthwatering

seafood is synonymous with Chesapeake Bay cuisine, but one crustacean tempts our taste buds the most: the blue crab. Its scientific name, *Callinectes sapidus*, loosely means "beautiful, savory swimmer." In foodie terms, that translates to "delicious."

"Blue crab has a sweet yet hearty taste," says Rebecca Bent, author of *Down at the Shore Cookbook* and recipe creator for CrabPlace.com. "Mid-Atlantic crab cakes are world-renowned," she says. "The best ones allow the crabmeat flavor to shine." Mini Surf-and-Turf Burgers do just that. The bite-size crab cake has just enough seasoning to make it interesting, and the simple beef patty doesn't distract from the crab.

Blue crab isn't the Mid-Atlantic's only culinary prize. For an eye-opening start to brunch, try an oyster shooter. The spicy dressed-up Bloody Mary mix is among the best we've tried, and even more fun as a shot with fresh-shucked oysters.

Or whip up an authentic clambake. Most beaches won't allow the required sand pit, hot rocks, and loads of fresh seaweed, so consider Rebecca's stovetop version. Steamer clams, potatoes, sweet corn, and sausage marry in a spicy broth spiked with Old Bay seasoning.

For recipes, turn to page 132.



Mini Surf-and-Turf Burgers
(recipe on page 132)

seafood primer

Mini Surf-and-Turf Burgers

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocktail sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup tartar sauce

Mini Burgers

Mini Crab Cakes

3 large pieces of white bread, toasted and cut into 2-inch squares

Combine cocktail and tartar sauces in a small bowl. Prepare Mini Burgers, cover, and keep warm. Prepare Mini Crab Cakes, cover, and keep warm.

Place Mini Burgers on toasted bread squares. Stack Mini Crab Cakes on top; skewer with decorative toothpick. Serve with cocktail sauce mixture. Makes 1 dozen.

Mini Burgers

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound lean ground beef

1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt

1 tablespoon olive oil, divided

Place meat in a medium bowl; stir in parsley and salt. Form mixture into 12 Mini Burgers.

Heat $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Fry burgers, in 2 batches, 3 minutes on each side or until done. Repeat with remaining oil and burgers. Makes 1 dozen.

Mini Crab Cakes

1 large egg, beaten

3 tablespoons mayonnaise

1 tablespoon finely chopped pimientos

4 saltine crackers, crumbled

1 teaspoon seafood seasoning

1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound back fin or lump crabmeat

2 tablespoons canola oil, divided

Combine egg and next 5 ingredients, and mix well. Gently fold in crab; don't overmix. Form into 12 Mini Crab Cakes. (The patties will be fairly wet.)

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Fry crab cakes, in 2 batches, 2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Repeat with remaining oil and crab cakes. Makes 1 dozen.

Down at the Shore Clam Boil

Rebecca gives directions for cleaning clams, but many markets sell them ready to cook.

4 pounds steamer clams, scrubbed

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornmeal

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Old Bay seasoning

2 garlic heads, peeled and halved

4 onions

1 pound small new potatoes, scrubbed

1 teaspoon kosher salt

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

6 ears sweet corn, husks removed, cut into 4 pieces each

2 pounds mild sausage, cut into 3-inch links

French baguette, sliced

Melted butter

Place clams in a large bowl. Discard broken shells or clams that won't close. Fill bowl with cold water to cover. Sprinkle cornmeal over clams, and stir. Let sit 3 to 6 hours to allow clams to purge sand from their shells.

Recipe continues on page 134.

seafood primer

Remove clams from water, and rinse thoroughly. Set aside.

Place a steamer insert into a large (16-quart) stockpot, and fill halfway with water. Add Old Bay, garlic, and onions, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to simmer; and add potatoes and next 4 ingredients. (Make sure ingredients are completely submerged in water.)

Cover and cook 10 to 12 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add clams. Cover and cook 4 to 5 minutes or until clams open. Discard any that do not open.

Spoon into serving bowls, including extra cooking liquid, if desired. Serve with French baguette, melted butter, and additional Old Bay. Makes 6 servings. 🍴

To purchase fresh seafood products for delivery, as well as a copy of Rebecca Bent's *Down at the Shore Cookbook* (Rebecca Bent, 2006), visit crabplace.com.

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Get our 5 favorite crab cake recipes.

Chesapeake Bay-style Oyster Shooters

You'll probably have extra Bloody Mary mixture after making these spicy shooters.

6 cups Bloody Mary Mix

1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning

2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vodka

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon hot sauce

2 dozen small to medium fresh oysters in the shell, shucked

Combine first 5 ingredients in a large pitcher. Place 1 oyster in a cordial or shot glass. Top with Bloody Mary mixture. Makes 24 servings.

