

Published January 30th, 2013

Nothing Says Love Like Crab Bisque

By Susie Iventosch

Crab bisque is definitely a labor of love ... love of crab and love for those you are serving, because it is quite a bit of work! First, you really need to have the shells to make a proper broth, so you must spend the time to remove the crab meat from those crazy crustaceans. I use both Dungeness and King crab, because the flavor of Dungeness is so sweet and the meat of the King crab is so nice and so much easier to remove from the shell.

This recipe really has two main parts: the broth and the vegetable sauté/puree. If you make extra broth, which I did, you can freeze it for another batch and you will have saved an entire step of the process!

Crab Bisque



Photo Susie Iventosch

1 bottle clam juice (8 ounce)

Juice of 1/2 of a lemon

1 cup heavy cream

3-4 cups crab broth

DIRECTIONS

Crab Broth

Remove crab meat from shells and reserve in a container until ready to use. Meanwhile, place empty shells (pieces and all) on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for approximately 15 minutes, or until shells begin to brown. Transfer from oven to a very large soup pot, breaking down any very large pieces of shell. Add 1 coarsely chopped onion, the carrot and the celery chunks. Cover with approximately 10 to 12 cups of water, or to where the water is about 1 inch above the shells. Bring just to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer over medium-low heat for an hour, or so. Do not stir the broth, but do skim off any foam that accumulates on top. Cool and strain. Set aside broth and discard shells at this point. *Broth will be slightly reduced in volume from simmering and it will have a slightly opaque appearance.

Veggie Sauté /Puree

Melt butter in large pot. Add onion, celery and garlic and cook over medium heat until tender, but not browned. Stir in salt, white pepper and Old Bay Seasoning (or your own spice blend). Add chopped tomatoes and continue to cook for a few more minutes. Stir in flour and cook for another minute. Whisk in tomato paste, sherry, clam juice and lemon juice and stir until well-integrated.

Remove from heat and mix in about 8 ounces of the reserved crab meat. Cool. When cool enough to handle, puree mixture until as smooth as possible and return to same pot. *It will not be completely smooth due to the crab meat, but it will be much smoother than before.

Add 3-4 cups of crab broth to puree and stir well. Mix in 1 cup heavy cream (can use Half & Half if you prefer) and cook over low heat until slightly reduced and slightly thickened, approximately 30 minutes to one hour, stirring occasionally. (The flavor of the bisque will intensify during this final heating.) Just before serving, add remaining crab meat to pot and cook just a few minutes longer, enough just to heat the crab meat. Serve with blue cheesy bread.

Blue Cheesy Bread

1 loaf of your favorite artisan bread, sliced into 1/2-inch thick slices

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

(Makes 6-8 servings)

INGREDIENTS

2 Dungeness crabs, approximately 2 pounds each, cleaned, meat removed and saved; reserve shells

2 King crab legs, meat removed (and saved) and shells reserved

4 tablespoons butter

1 onion, finely chopped (for puree)

1 onion, coarsely chopped or sliced (for broth)

1 carrot, cut into large chunks (for broth)

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 stalks celery, finely chopped (for puree)

1 stalk celery cut into large pieces (for broth)

2 large tomatoes, chopped

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning (or substitute-see

below)

1 teaspoon white pepper

1 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons tomato paste

1 cup dry sherry

3/4 cup blue cheese, crumbled

Spread olive oil on tops of bread slices with a pastry brush. Sprinkle blue cheese over top and bake at 400° for approximately 10-15 minutes, or until bread is crunchy and blue cheese is melted and beginning to brown on top.

Old Bay Seasoning Mix

This is a spice blend used in many seafood dishes and marketed by McCormick & Company. It includes: dry mustard powder, paprika, celery seed and celery salt, bay leaf, black and red pepper, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, mace, nutmeg, cardamom, salt and ginger. Since this is quite a few ingredients, and the bisque calls for salt and pepper anyway, I limited my "old bay seasoning" to the cardamom, paprika, nutmeg, ginger, allspice and the red pepper flakes, and I used just about 1/4 teaspoon of each.

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA