

New England Clam Chowder

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yield: **2 quarts**

- 1 1/4 pound canned clams, minced, juices reserved
- 2-3 cups bottled clam juice
- 2 bacon slices, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme leaves, chopped
- 1 pound potatoes, peeled, diced
- 3 cups heavy cream or half and half
- 6 tablespoons dry sherry, or to taste
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Tabasco sauce, to taste
- Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- Oyster or saltine crackers, as needed

Drain the clam juice from the minced clams and combine with enough bottled juice to equal 3 cups of liquid.

Cook the bacon slowly in a soup pot over medium heat until lightly crisp, about 8 minutes.

Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the flour and cook over low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, for 2-3 minutes.

Whisk in the clam juice, bring to a simmer, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. The liquid should be the consistency of heavy cream. If it is too thick, add more clam juice to adjust the consistency. Add the bay leaf and fresh thyme.

Add the potatoes and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the clams and cream in saucepan and simmer together until the clams are cooked, about 5-8 minutes.

When the potatoes are tender, add the clams and cream to the soup base. Simmer for 1-2 minutes.

Stir in the sherry. Season to taste with salt, pepper, Tabasco, and Worcestershire sauce. Serve in bowls with the crackers on the side.