



Hot Tips on Cool Crab Dishes

It's easy to love rich, sweet, buttery crabmeat. But some seafood lovers get stumped when it comes to actually purchasing crabmeat and preparing it at home. The Louisiana Seafood Board offers these tips for the home cook.

How Is Crab Sold?

Seafood delis and grocery stores sell crabs live, boiled or steamed. Retailers also sell fresh-picked crabmeat. It's simply boiled or steamed, unseasoned, and ready-to-eat. This is a good starting point for the uninitiated.

Traditionally, there are four kinds of crabmeat: Lump, Special, Claw and Crab Fingers. Lump, the chunks of white body meat, is the most prized and best used in showy, elegant dishes.

Special is the white flaked body meat best used in crab cakes, crab balls and other recipes that call for blends of ingredients.

The Claw meat is latte-colored and some say the most flavorful, nice for stuffed eggplants and crabs. Claw meat features both economy and taste.

Crab Fingers are the pincers themselves broken to expose the meat and served as appetizers.

Don't be confused by the variance in today's language. Lump is sometimes called Jumbo Lump; Special is also called All Lump; and Crab Fingers can be Cocktail Claws.

How Is Crabmeat Packaged?

Fresh-picked crabmeat is sold in one pound, tightly-sealed, containers. Check for proper labels: kind of meat (Lump, Special, Claw, Crab Fingers), Date Packaged, weight (16 oz.), and Country of Origin. For the best taste and quality, always choose American products.

How Do I Store Crabmeat?

Fresh seafood should be well-iced at all times. Store it in the coldest spot in your refrigerator and use a thermometer to keep your refrigerator set below 40°F.

The shelf life of fresh-picked crabmeat is 10 – 12 days from the Date Packaged. Once at home, it's best to use it in one or two days.

Crabmeat can be frozen for up to two months with fair results. Using a thermometer, keep freezer below 0° F. Prechill the crabmeat; package it in small, moisture proof, vapor proof containers; expel air before sealing containers. Spread out in the freezer for rapid freezing. Thaw in the refrigerator for a day.

How Do I Serve Crabmeat?

Easily and delicately, to preserve the exquisite flavor.

CRABMEAT SALAD NICOISE

(from Nice, Italy)

serves 4

1 lb. Louisiana lump crabmeat

8 new potatoes

1 lb. green beans, sliced in halves

1/3 cup olive oil

1/2 cup white wine vinegar

2 green onions, chopped

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

6 cups or 1 head butter lettuce, torn

1/4 cup small ripe black olives

1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

Boil potatoes 15 minutes or until tender, drain, cool 10 minutes, cut in half, place in shallow dish. Boil beans 10 minutes, drain, cool, add to potatoes. In a small jar with a tight lid pour oil, vinegar, onion, salt & pepper, and shake well; pour 2/3 of dressing over potatoes & beans, stir, cover, and refrigerate 2 – 24 hours. To serve, arrange lettuce on four plates, spoon potato mix on top, divide crabmeat among four plates, garnish with tomatoes and olives, drizzle with dressing.



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