

# SHELLFISH

The term shellfish covers a number of edible ocean-living species that are covered by a protective shell. They are classified as follows:

**Crustacean** A group of mainly aquatic shellfish that can move independently. They have segmented bodies, no back bones, jointed legs/claws, and two antennae. This group includes lobsters, crabs, prawns, shrimps, and krill.

**Mollusc** Soft-bodied invertebrates with a hard shell. They can be subdivided into several groups:

**Gastropod/univalve** Typically found in one coiled shell, this group includes whelks, periwinkles, snails, and conch.

**Bivalves/filter feeders** Typically found in two hinged shells, these are often referred to as filter feeders as they feed using a filter action that pumps water, extracts the nutrients from the water, and then expels it. This group includes oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops.

**Cephalopods** A group of invertebrate animals that have tubular heads and a number of arms with suckers. Includes octopus, squid, and cuttlefish.

## BUY

The senses of sight, touch, and smell are vital when assessing the quality of shellfish whether buying live, raw, or cooked creatures.

**Feel** When cooked or raw, the limbs of crabs and lobsters should hold firmly and snap back into position if extended. Floppy or loose limbs may indicate it is dead or dying, and so may not be safe to eat. It should feel heavy for its size and not be

seeping water; a crab or lobster that feels light indicates that it has recently shed its shell, and may lack brown meat. Shells should feel crisp and dry.

**Look** All live shellfish should show signs of life, most obviously movement. Never buy dead, uncooked molluscs as decomposition begins immediately after death and they may not be safe to eat. Avoid any with cracked or damaged shells. Live bivalves should have a closed shell, or one that will close when tapped. The tubular part of octopus, cuttlefish, and squid should be white in appearance; as the flesh loses condition it will become pink and should be avoided.

**Smell** Good-quality cooked shellfish should have a pleasant and fresh smell with the sweet aroma of sea ozone. Avoid shellfish that smells stale, musty, and of ammonia as it is beginning to decompose beyond the point of being safe to eat.

## STORE

All shellfish should be enjoyed as soon after purchase as possible. Unwrap the shellfish as soon as you get it home so that it is not sitting in any juice, arrange it on a plate and cover with cling film. Live shellfish (both crustacean and molluscs) can be stored for a short period of time in the refrigerator, kept at below 3°C (37°F). They are best put in a lightly covered bowl towards the bottom of the fridge. Avoid soaking live shellfish in tap water, as this will shorten their life span.

## COOK

Cooking shellfish demands particular care and attention for best results. When overcooked, shellfish will often end up fibrous, tough, shrunken, and dry with little flavour; when undercooked, however, shellfish can be both unsafe to eat as well as unpalatable.

**GRILL** This method of cooking uses a high heat and so it is best for prepared raw shellfish because it is easy to overcook shellfish that has already been

cooked. Suitable for scallops, split and prepared lobster, de-veined and butterflied prawns, langoustine, crayfish, clams, and squid.

**DEEP-FRY** This is a popular method of cooking seafood such as prawns, oysters, and scallops. The fish or seafood is often coated in batter, flour, or breadcrumbs before being immersed in deep, hot, corn or groundnut oil.

**STEAM** This gentle cooking method is suitable for live bivalves such as clams and mussels, and also crab, lobster, and prawns. The shellfish are either cooked above a liquid without touching it, or in the minimum amount of liquid, as here, so that they cook in the steam and are not poached. Any liquid left in the pan can be served with the cooked shellfish or used to make an accompanying sauce.

**BOIL** This simple technique is suitable for cooking live gastropods, live crabs, members of the lobster group, and raw prawns. The shellfish can be cooked simply in plain, salted water or, for more flavour, a court bouillon. Prepare the raw shellfish before boiling just as you would for any other method of cooking.

**FLAVOUR PAIRINGS** It is easy to overpower the taste of many types of shellfish, so moderation is the key to flavouring. Each country and culture has its own classic partnerships: in Europe shellfish is usually simply cooked and served with an oil-based dressing. Cooked and cold crustaceans are matched with citrus dressings and mayonnaise. Classic herb partnerships with shellfish include parsley, thyme, bay leaf, tarragon, chervil, and chives. Shellfish cooked in the Far East will have its own flavour matches that include ginger, chilli, soy sauce, fish sauce, and sesame.

*Name the proses:*



**Choose 1 shellfish in the picture and complete the table as in example:**

ABALONE	
Abalone is considered a rare delicacy and gourmet food. It is harvested from the wild and from aquaculture in many coastal waters in oceans worldwide. There are about 100 species of this sea snail, which vary greatly in size. The well-flavoured meat is found in an ear-shaped shell.	
<b>AVAILABILITY</b> <b>Fresh:</b> Sold in the shell. Preserved: <b>Frozen</b> meat/steaks (ready tenderized), canned, dried (used for flavouring soups), salted.	
<b>EAT</b> Tenderize by pounding before cooking. Sauté or fry very briefly, as it toughens easily. Add dried abalone to soup and simmer for a long period of time to add flavour.	
<b>FLAVOUR PAIRINGS</b> Oriental: Chinese ear mushrooms, sesame, soy sauce, ginger, garlic, butter.	
<b>CLASSIC RECIPE</b> Abalone with oyster sauce.	



*For help*

<b>AVAILABILITY</b>
<b>EAT</b>
<b>FLAVOUR PAIRINGS</b>
<b>CLASSIC RECIPE</b>

Complete the recepy:

## MOULES MARINIÈRES

### Equipment

**Knives:**  
Paring knife (*office*), slicing  
knife (*éminceur*)

**Tools:**  
Fine chinois, colander,  
araignée, whisk

**Pans:**  
Small russe, small marmite,  
bain marie

### Serving

4 persons



Steamed Mussels



Quantity		Ingredient
U.S.	Metric	
4 lb 7 oz	2 kg	Mussels
4 ¼ oz	120 g	Butter
2 oz	60 g	Shallots, finely diced ( <i>ciseler</i> )
1 pc	1 pc	Garlic clove, finely chopped ( <i>hacher</i> )
1 pt	500 mL	White wine
1 pc	1 pc	<i>Bouquet garni</i>
¼ oz	10 g	Parsley, finely chopped ( <i>hacher</i> )
		Salt and freshly ground pepper

Reduce

soft

Pull off

mussels

Melt

wine

water

liquid

a boil

shaking

open

taste

Clean the Mussels

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the threads hanging from the shells, scrape off any barnacles or vegetation, and thoroughly rinse the mussels in three changes of clean, cold \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Check for dead \_\_\_\_\_ by pinching them closed. Discard any that do not close shut.

#### *Cuisson*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the butter in a large pot over low heat and sweat (*suer*) the shallots and garlic until \_\_\_\_\_. Deglaze with the white \_\_\_\_\_ and add the ***bouquet garni***. Increase the heat to high and reduce the \_\_\_\_\_ by two-thirds. Add the mussels, bring the liquid back to \_\_\_\_\_, and cover the pot to trap the steam. Cook for 5 minutes, \_\_\_\_\_ the pot to stir the mussels while cooking. When the mussels are completely cooked they will \_\_\_\_\_ (*discard any that do not open*). Decant the mussels from the cooking liquid and keep them hot and covered with a lid.

2. Allow the cooking liquid to rest for 5 minutes to let the grit settle to the bottom of the pot. Carefully strain the cooking liquid through a fine mesh sieve (***chinois***).

***Note:*** Do not strain all the liquid from the pot as it contains very fine grit.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ the cooking liquid to \_\_\_\_\_ and season if necessary. Mount the sauce with cold butter and add the chopped parsley.

#### *To Serve*

1. Arrange the mussels in a deep, heated serving dish or bowl. For presentation, completely open a few of the mussels and pour the sauce over the top. Serve immediately.