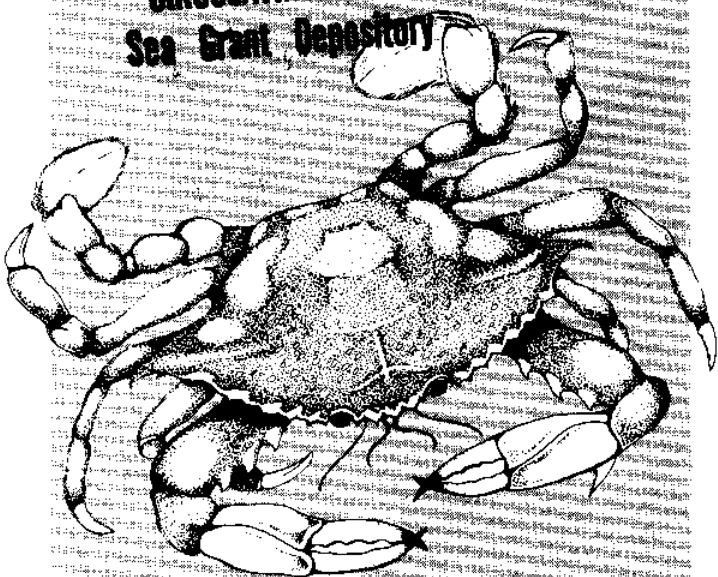


Cooking the Crab Catch

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The crab is one of Texas' most popular shellfish because of its tender meat and distinctive flavor. Blue crab meat is an excellent source of high-quality protein, vitamins and minerals, and it is very low in calories. This delicacy, available in several forms, is in plentiful supply throughout the year and offers a lot of versatility in recipe preparation.

How to Buy Crabs

Crabs are available in these market forms: live, cooked in the shell, cooked and frozen, fresh cooked meat, and canned meat. Fresh cooked crab meat is the most common market form. Picked from hard-shell crabs, packed, chilled and sold by the pound, it can be purchased according to its location on the crab's body.

Lump meat — sometimes called backfin meat. These solid lumps of white meat from the body of the crab are best used in recipes where appearance is important, as in cocktails and salads. It comes from the two rear body compartments next to the swimming fins.

Flake — small pieces of white meat from the walking legs. Check for and remove any bits of cartilage or shell before using this form of crab meat.

Lump and flake (or "special") — a combination providing the good qualities of both types of meat. It's economical for use in salads, dips and spreads.

Claw — muscle tissue picked from the claws that has a brownish tint. Use it in recipes where appearance is not important such as in dips, casseroles and sandwich spreads. Claw meat is generally lower priced than lump and flake.

All crab meat is cooked before it is packaged and can be used without further preparation. However, crab meat is merely pasteurized by cooking, and like other pasteurized foods, must be kept refrigerated. Crab meat keeps well up to one week in the refrigerator. It's a good idea to store it in a container surrounded by ice. Crab meat does not freeze well, but if freezing is necessary, use it within three weeks.

Preparing Soft-Shell Crabs

Clean soft-shell crabs by removing the inedible portions before cooking. Sharp scissors work well for these procedures. After soft-shell crabs have

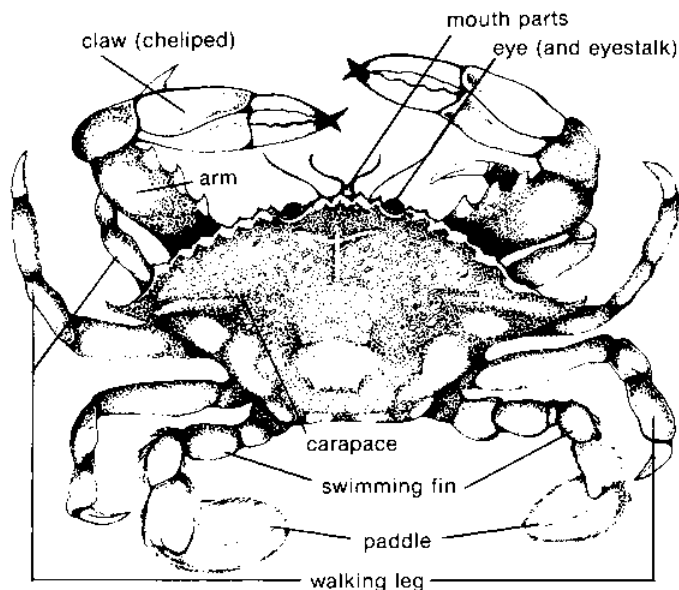
been cleaned, the entire crab may be sauteed, deep fried or baked.

- Pull the apron and associated structures away from the body. Cut the apron off at the body line.
- Cut off the mouth parts just behind the eyestalk.
- Cut off the gills which lie beneath the top shell at the pointed back.
- Remove the stomach from behind the mouth area and rinse the crab thoroughly.

Preparing Hard-Shell Crabs

Because of the blue crab's ornery disposition and lightning-fast claws, it is recommended that live crabs be placed in the kitchen sink and rinsed with hot water before actual preparation begins. This procedure removes debris and partially anesthetizes the shellfish, making them easier to handle and less susceptible to pain in the early stages of cooking.

Add chopped celery ribs and lemon slices to a large pot of salted boiling water. Drop the crabs into the water and boil for approximately 15



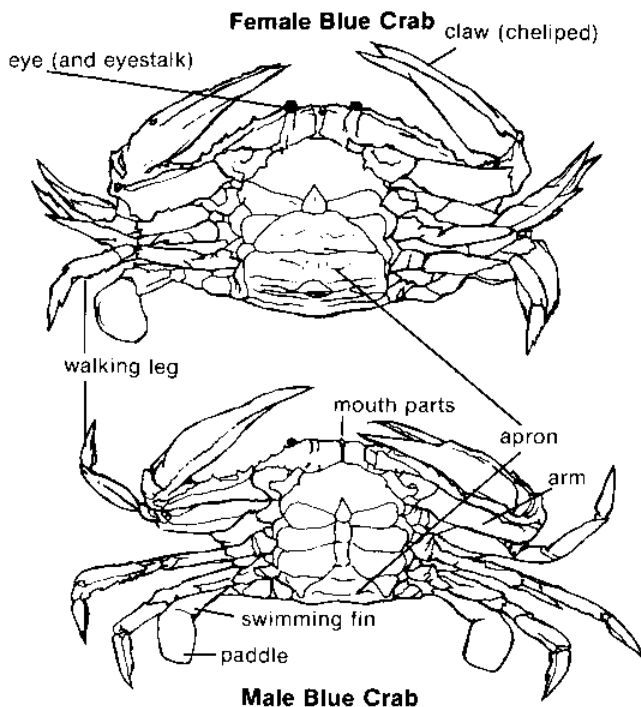
Parts of the Blue Crab

minutes. The shells will turn red during cooking. Pour off the water, pick the meat and chill. Then use it in a favorite recipe.

Picking the meat consists of removing the edible portion of the crab after cooking.

- Break off legs and claws. Crack the claws with a crab claw cracker, hammer or nutcracker and remove the meat.
- Remove the top shell with a knife or other utensil.
- Remove and discard the leathery gills.
- Remove the mouth parts and rinse out the contents of the stomach which is in the area behind the mouth.
- Break the body in half lengthwise, and pick the meat from the body compartments.

The versatility offered by the Gulf Coast blue crab is such that it can be used to the delight of seafood connoisseurs for any course of a meal. As appetizers or hors d'oeuvres, you can feature blue crab meat in dips, spreads or canapes. Suitable accompaniment dishes are au gratin, salad, soup or stuffing. Blue crab entrees include casseroles, gumbos, croquettes or fritters, and various classics such as Divan and Louie.



Crab Talk

Apron — Abdominal area of crab by which taxonomic and sexual characteristics are determined.

Berry Crab — Sponge crab.

Buckram — A crab past the paper stage but not in the hard-shell condition.

Buster — Molting crab that is beginning to emerge from its shell.

Carapace — Hard, upper shell of the crab that is removed for cleaning.

Channeler — Large male crab that remains in deep channels during the summer.

Chelipeds — First pair of legs specialized as claws for seizing and crushing.

Dead Man's Fingers — The gills, located under the carapace.

Doubler — Pair of mating crabs; buck and rider.

Estuary — An area where the tides meet the river current; an arm of the sea at the lower end of the river.

Exoskeleton — Any invertebrate skeleton that forms the outermost covering of the body, giving it support and permanent shape.

Fat Crab — A crab approaching the molting period; also describes the crab between the buckram and peeler phases.

Green Crab — White-rim crab; sometimes the raw, uncooked crab.

Hard Crab — Crab with a hard shell; following the buckram condition.

Jimmy Crab — A very large male crab; channeler.

Molt — Periodic shedding of the exoskeleton to permit growth.

Nicking or Breaking a Crab — To break the movable finger of the claws to prevent their use.

Paper Shell — A crab past the soft-shell stage but not yet a buckram; approximately 9-12 hours after the molt.

Peeler Crab — Hard crab that has a fully formed soft shell beneath.

Scavenger — An animal that eats animal wastes or dead bodies of animals not killed by itself.

Sook — Adult female crab.

Sponge Crab — Female crab laden with developing eggs.

Tinback — Colloquial name for a crab just past the soft-shell stage whose shell is almost hard again and feels like thin metal.

Ventral — Relating to the underside of the body.

Zoea — One of the larval stages of the blue crab.

Stuffed Crab Jubilee

<i>1 pound flaked crab meat</i>	<i>1/4 cup milk</i>
<i>2 slices bacon</i>	<i>1/2 cup melted margarine</i>
<i>1/2 cup chopped onion</i>	<i>2 tablespoons chopped parsley</i>
<i>1/2 cup chopped celery</i>	<i>1 teaspoon dry mustard</i>
<i>1/4 cup chopped bell pepper</i>	<i>1/2 teaspoon salt</i>
<i>1 clove minced garlic</i>	<i>1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce</i>
<i>1 1/2 cups cracker crumbs</i>	<i>Dash cayenne pepper</i>
<i>1 beaten egg</i>	

Cook bacon until crisp. Crumble and set aside. Sauté vegetables in bacon fat. Add all ingredients in large mixing bowl and combine well. Stuff mixture into shells or casserole dish. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes at 350 degrees (12 minutes on HIGH in the microwave oven). Makes 6 servings.

Crab Imperial Short Cut

<i>1 pound lump crab meat</i>	<i>1/2 cup finely chopped green pepper</i>
<i>1 beaten egg</i>	
<i>3/4 cup mayonnaise</i>	<i>1 jar (2 ounces) pimiento</i>
<i>2 tablespoons milk</i>	

In mixing bowl, combine egg, mayonnaise and milk. Add green pepper and pimiento. Fold in crab meat, being careful not to break the lumps. Portion mixture into individual ramekins or in a casserole. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Crab Meat Cornucopia

<i>1 pound lump blue crab meat</i>	<i>1 cup mandarin orange sections, well drained</i>
<i>1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing</i>	<i>1/2 cup sliced ripe olives</i>
<i>2 teaspoons sugar</i>	<i>1/4 cup sliced green onions</i>
<i>1 tablespoon lemon juice</i>	<i>Crisp salad greens</i>
<i>4 teaspoons grated orange rind</i>	<i>6 avocado halves, or 6 slices of peeled cantaloupe</i>
<i>1 cup thinly sliced celery</i>	

Remove remaining shell or cartilage from crab meat. In a small container, mix mayonnaise, sugar, lemon juice and orange rind. Combine chilled crab meat, celery, oranges, olives and onions. Add dressing mixture and toss lightly. Serve on crisp salad greens, in avocado halves or in center of melon slices. Makes 6 servings.

Crab Meat Stuffed Mushrooms

<i>1/2 pound flaked blue crab meat</i>	<i>2 tablespoons mayonnaise</i>
<i>15-20 large mushrooms</i>	<i>2 tablespoons chopped onions</i>
<i>1/2 cup melted margarine</i>	<i>1 teaspoon lemon juice</i>
<i>2 lightly beaten eggs</i>	<i>1/8 teaspoon white pepper</i>
<i>4 tablespoons soft bread crumbs</i>	

Remove remaining shell and cartilage from crab meat. Rinse mushrooms and remove stems. Brush mushroom caps with half the margarine and arrange the caps in a greased baking dish. In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients except remaining margarine and half the crumbs. Fill each cap with crab mixture. Combine remaining margarine and crumbs and sprinkle over stuffed mushrooms. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes (5 minutes on MEDIUM in the microwave oven). Makes 15 to 20 hors d'oeuvres.



Blue Crab-Broccoli Bake with Filbert Sauce

<i>1 pound blue crab meat</i>	<i>1/2 teaspoon salt</i>
<i>2 packages (10 ounces each) frozen broccoli spears</i>	<i>1/8 teaspoon pepper</i>
<i>1/3 cup chopped filbert nuts or almonds</i>	<i>1 1/2 cups milk</i>
<i>1/4 cup margarine</i>	<i>1 crushed chicken bouillon cube</i>
<i>3 tablespoons flour</i>	<i>1 tablespoon lemon juice</i>
	<i>2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese</i>

Remove any cartilage from crab meat. Cook broccoli spears as directed on package and drain. Arrange broccoli spears in heat-proof platter on shallow baking dish and keep warm. Lightly brown filberts in margarine. Add milk and bouillon cube and cook until sauce is thickened, stirring constantly. Fold in crab meat and lemon juice. Spoon over broccoli spears. Sprinkle with filberts and cheese. Bake at 400 degrees until sauce is bubbling, about 15 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Curried Crab Soup

<i>1/2 pound blue crab meat, lump or flake</i>	<i>1 tablespoon curry powder</i>
<i>4 tablespoons margarine</i>	<i>1/2 cup peeled, chopped tomato</i>
<i>1/2 cup finely chopped onion</i>	<i>3 cups chicken broth</i>
<i>1 clove minced garlic</i>	<i>1/2 cup heavy cream</i>
<i>1/2 cup peeled, diced apple</i>	<i>1/2 teaspoon salt</i>
<i>3 tablespoons flour</i>	<i>1/4 teaspoon liquid hot pepper sauce</i>

Remove remaining shell or cartilage from crab meat. Saute' onion and garlic in margarine until tender. Add apple and stir. Sprinkle in flour and curry powder. Add tomato and chicken broth and stir rapidly with a wire whisk. When thick and smooth add cream, salt, pepper and liquid hot pepper sauce. Gently fold in crab meat and heat thoroughly. Makes 4 servings.

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