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• Dining •  
**Crab Catch!**

By Susie Iventosch



Bruno Bartolini, seafood expert at Diablo Foods in Lafayette

Photo Susie Iventosch

Many of you may recognize Bruno Bartolini, one of the many helpful faces behind the seafood counter at Diablo Foods in Lafayette. Though semi-retired, Bartolini is just as often at work, helping customers and teaching them the ins and outs of the seafood industry. In the business for 40 years, he has both wholesale and retail experience under his belt and he knows a lot about seafood, especially crab.

"Seafood is my specialty," he says. "For any question you have, I have the answer!"

According to Bartolini, there are several different types of crab, such as the blue crab, which doesn't have much meat and is used more for its flavor in dishes like gumbo. There is also soft-shell

crab, where the entire crab – shell and all – is eaten. Then there is the Alaskan king crab, which is very meaty, but is always frozen. He prefers the Dungeness crab, named after a town in Washington State, which has sweeter meat and is always available fresh during the season.

"The crab from Eureka and north looks very good this year," Bartolini said. "They are coming in at 2.25 to 2.5 pounds, whereas the local waters are producing crabs of smaller size, about 1.5 to 1.75 pounds."

And despite a sluggish economy, crab is still on the menu in many homes.

"We sold between 7,000 and 8,000 pounds of crab for Christmas this year, alone," Bartolini said.

"We had a crew of 14 people for two days prior to Christmas just to clean and crack the crab for the orders we had!"

He says it's like this every year at the holidays, but, crab is very popular all the way through June. Customers can always call ahead for orders, to save time.

Dungeness crab season opens in November or December and typically runs through June.

"Exclusive Fresh out of Half Moon Bay specially selects crab for us," Bartolini noted. "They bring in about 1,000 pounds per haul and keep them live in tanks onboard the ship. Then they cook the crab back at the plant for about 20 minutes in boiling water with rock salt. Immediately, they immerse them in an ice bath."

**Crab Feeds**



Photo Susie Iventosch

**Craving crab but don't feel like fixing it yourself? Over the next few weeks you can have your crab and contribute to a cause as well. Many of our local philanthropic organizations will be hosting their annual Crab Feeds; just the ticket for a crackin' good time!**

**Come to the Benchmark of all Crab Feeds**  
**Knights of Columbus 15th Annual**  
 Saturday, January 30, 2010  
 St. Monicas Parish Center, Moraga  
 6 PM Hot Appetizers and No-Host Bar  
 7:30 PM Feast on Fresh Crab, Pasta, Caesar Salad and Dessert  
 Chicken available upon prior request.  
 Come for the crab... stay for the fabulous raffle prizes!  
 \$50.00 Must reserve.  
 Karl Anderson 283-3679



**Bruno's Cracked Crab**

**Ingredients**

- 1 large whole fresh crab, cracked and cleaned
- Marinade:
- ¼ cup really good olive oil
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped Italian parsley
- ¼ cup good white wine

**Directions**

Rinse and dry crab and place in a large bowl. Whisk the marinade ingredients together. Pour marinade over crab and toss well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour, or longer. Toss again. Eat with lots of bread and butter!



If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com) or call our office at 925-377-0977

Many of our readers like Susie's recipes. Our website now features a link to our recipe page where you can read, print or download all of the recipes we have published.

Go to: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)

**Gigi's Crab Dip**

This recipe comes from my grandmother's recipe file. She loved to cook and entertain, so it's always fun to read the notes marked on the recipe cards. Grandmothers' recipe boxes should be considered national treasures, as they not only offer a folkloric anthropology of the times, but also serve as a living history of dining and entertaining trends. This recipe makes a wonderful base for crab cakes, too. All you need to do is add an egg and some bread crumbs, along with diced celery and parsley, and voila, you've got crab cake batter.



Gigi's Crab Dip

Photo Susie Iventosch

**Ingredients**

- ½ pound fresh crab meat
- ¼ cup chopped water chestnuts
- 2 tablespoons finely sliced green onions (sautéed or raw)
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons Louisiana Hot Sauce
- Juice of half lemon
- ½ teaspoon New Mexico Chili powder
- ½ teaspoon sea salt (if needed)

**Directions**

Mix all ingredients and serve cold with crackers, or spread on baguette slices and broil for a hot hors d'oeuvres. My grandmother used to serve this dip in mini-ice cream cones for cocktail parties. These are available at Whole Foods in the ice cream aisle. Be sure to use the regular, flat-bottomed cones, not the sugar cones!

**Crab Feed & Dance**  
 Saturday, February 6, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.  
 Bring your appetites & dancing shoes.  
 Music provided by popular DJ.  
 Dinner & Dance \$35; Dance only \$10.  
 For non-crab lovers: Chicken available by special advance order request. Dinner tickets MUST be purchased in advance.  
 For info. & reservations call (925) 672-6799.  
 Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga.



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 Proceeds benefit Soroptimist Intl. of 24-680, a non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world.

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