

Nothing Says Love Like Crab Bisque

By Susie Iventosch

Crab bisque is definitely a labor of love ... love of crab and love for those you are serving, because it is quite a bit of work! First, you really need to have the shells to make a proper broth, so you must spend the time to remove the crab meat from those crazy crustaceans. I use both Dungeness and King crab, because the flavor of Dungeness is so sweet and the meat of the King crab is so nice and so much easier to remove from the shell.

This recipe really has two main parts: the broth and the vegetable sauté/puree. If you make extra broth, which I did, you can freeze it for another batch and you will have saved an entire step of the process!



Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe can be found on our website:** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Crab Bisque

(Makes 6-8 servings)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Dungeness crabs, approximately 2 pounds each, cleaned, meat removed and saved; reserve shells
- 2 King crab legs, meat removed (and saved) and shells reserved
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped (for puree)
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped or sliced (for broth)
- 1 carrot, cut into large chunks (for broth)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped (for puree)
- 1 stalk celery cut into large pieces (for broth)
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning (or substitute-see below)
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup dry sherry
- 1 bottle clam juice (8 ounce)
- Juice of ½ of a lemon
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3-4 cups crab broth

DIRECTIONS

Crab Broth

Remove crab meat from shells and reserve in a container until ready to use. Meanwhile, place empty shells (pieces and all) on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for approximately 15 minutes, or until shells begin to brown. Transfer from oven to a very large soup pot, breaking down any very large pieces of shell. Add 1 coarsely chopped onion, the carrot and the celery chunks. Cover with approximately 10 to 12 cups of water, or to where the water is about 1 inch above the shells. Bring just to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer over medium-low heat for an hour, or so. Do not stir the broth, but do skim off any foam that accumulates on top. Cool and strain. Set aside broth and discard shells at this point. *Broth will be slightly reduced in volume from simmering and it will have a slightly opaque appearance.

Veggie Sauté /Puree

Melt butter in large pot. Add onion, celery and garlic and cook over medium heat until tender, but not browned. Stir in salt, white pepper and Old Bay Seasoning (or your own spice blend). Add chopped tomatoes and continue to cook for a few more minutes. Stir in flour and cook for another minute. Whisk in tomato paste, sherry, clam juice and lemon juice and stir until well-integrated. Remove from heat and mix in about 8 ounces of the reserved crab meat. Cool. When cool enough to handle, puree mixture until as smooth as possible and return to same pot. *It will not be completely smooth due to the crab meat, but it will be much smoother than before. Add 3-4 cups of crab broth to puree and stir well. Mix in 1 cup heavy cream (can use Half & Half if you prefer) and cook over low heat until slightly reduced and slightly thickened, approximately 30 minutes to one hour, stirring occasionally. (The flavor of the bisque will intensify during this final heating.) Just before serving, add remaining crab meat to pot and cook just a few minutes longer, enough just to heat the crab meat. Serve with blue cheesy bread.

Blue Cheesy Bread

1 loaf of your favorite artisan bread, sliced into ½-inch thick slices
 ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 ¾ cup blue cheese, crumbled
 Spread olive oil on tops of bread slices with a pastry brush. Sprinkle blue cheese over top and bake at 400° for approximately 10-15 minutes, or until bread is crunchy and blue cheese is melted and beginning to brown on top.

Old Bay Seasoning Mix

This is a spice blend used in many seafood dishes and marketed by McCormick & Company. It includes: dry mustard powder, paprika, celery seed and celery salt, bay leaf, black and red pepper, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, mace, nutmeg, cardamom, salt and ginger. Since this is quite a few ingredients, and the bisque calls for salt and pepper anyway, I limited my "old bay seasoning" to the cardamom, paprika, nutmeg, ginger, allspice and the red pepper flakes, and I used just about ¼ teaspoon of each.



Photo Susie Iventosch

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Reunion Hootenanny Celebrates Stanley Choral Director Brian McKibben

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Lyrics were projected on the wall as approximately 30 former chorus students – accompanied by fellow alums on tambourines, a keyboard, acoustic guitars, and McKibben himself on his own guitar – sang tunes from the past: “Hotel California” (Eagles), “Country Comfort” (Elton John), and many more.

“Teachers don’t often get to know the impacts they have made, especially 30-plus years after the fact,” said Rahlmann Plumb. “To be able to thank Brian and share with him how meaningful an experience it was to be in his class was really a gift.”

The former chorus students came from as far as the Pacific Northwest to join in the sing-along and reminisce with their choral director.

Anita Orne, who now teaches music in Washington, and also plays in a trio said, “While Brian taught chorus, which implies singing, he scooped me up – a fledgling guitarist with not much of a voice, and showed me the path to non-classical music (not a path too many schools offer), and the glories of playing back-up, which I still follow and teach today.”

Others also went on to pursue musical careers: David Sasse was cast in the recent Lamplighter’s Musical Theater production of “Princess Ida,” and Paul Rustigan has a Bay Area band called Swoop Unit.

Plans for the event started last November, and were coordinated on Facebook where a group of more than 70 members followed the preparations and rekindled friendships. Posts following the event underscored the respect, love and admiration students had, and continue to have, for McKibben and how his class changed who they were.

“Brian introduced me to the music of the time,” said Martha De Carbonel Patterson. “Before Little Chorus, I didn’t have a lot of confidence in myself, or felt I had much to offer. Like others have said, he made everyone feel unique and valued.”

Lynn Barakos explained how rare and wonderful the sing-along experience is: “Most of us in western ‘civilized’ society rarely get the chance to sit together with a group of friends making music, being silly, singing our guts out. . . Brian basically started my addiction to this kind of communal expression of musical joy!”

“If there’s anything I want from this life, it’s to have a chance to use music to bring people together in the cause of peace,” McKibben said. “I’ve been more than extremely fortunate to have had that chance, over and over. I’m not done yet.”

Plans for another Hootenanny are already being discussed.

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