



Manhattan Clam Chowder



Ingredients:

- 24 medium-size quahog clams, usually rated "top neck" or "cherrystone," rinsed
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- ¼ pound slab bacon
- 1 large Spanish onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 large ribs celery, cleaned and diced
- 1 medium-size green pepper, diced
- 2 medium-size carrots, peeled and diced
- Red-pepper flakes, to taste
- 3 large Yukon Gold potatoes, cubed
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed or roughly diced
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup chopped parsley.

Method:

1. Place clams in a heavy Dutch oven, add 4 cups water, and set over medium-high heat. Cover, and cook until clams have opened, 10 to 15 minutes. Clams that fail to open should be discarded. Strain broth through a sieve lined with cheesecloth or paper towels and set aside. Remove clams from shells, and set those aside as well.
2. Rinse the pot, and over medium-low heat, add butter and bacon, stirring occasionally until the fat has rendered and the pork has started to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to remove pork from fat, and set aside.
3. Add onions, garlic, celery, green peppers, and carrots to the fat and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft, 10 to 15 minutes. Add potatoes, and cook until they have just started to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Add 4 cups of clam broth, reserving the rest for another use. Add the sprigs of thyme and the bay leaf.
4. Partly cover the pot, and simmer gently until potatoes are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Using the back of a wooden spoon, smash a few potatoes against the side of the pot to release their starch and help thicken the broth.
5. Meanwhile, chop the clams into bits that are about the size of the bacon dice.
6. When potatoes are tender, stir in tomatoes, and heat through. Add chopped clams and reserved bacon, stirring to combine. Add black pepper to taste. Let chowder come to a simmer, and remove from heat. Fish out the thyme and the bay leaf, and discard.
7. The chowder should sit to allow the ingredients to meld. Reheat and garnish with chopped parsley and serve with oyster crackers.