

Crab Bisque

Serves 4

To make this creamy, flavorful crab bisque, you will need to make some homemade shellfish stock, so it pays to keep your leftover shells and freeze them until you have the occasion to make the stock. Making stock isn't hard, like making chicken stock, it just takes time. You can freeze it in advance of using it.

Ingredients

Stock ingredients:

- 4-6 cups crab shells
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced or chopped
- 1 carrot, roughly sliced or chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly sliced or chopped
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- Several sprigs parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- 10-15 whole peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons salt

Soup ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp butter, unsalted
- 1/3 cup shallots, chopped
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 4 cups of shellfish stock
- 1/4 cup white rice
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 1/4 lb or more of cooked crabmeat
- 1 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper



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Instructions

Making the stock - Before making the bisque, you'll need to make the shellfish stock

1. 1 Break crab shells into smaller pieces by putting in a sealed, thick plastic bag and either rolling with a rolling pin or hitting with a meat hammer to crush. Don't crush too small. You can even skip this step if you want, if your shell pieces are already well broken up. Put in a large stock pot and cover with an inch (but no more than an inch) of water.
2. 2 Put the stove temperature on medium high and slowly heat the shells in the water. As soon as you see that little bubbles are starting to come up to the surface, reduce the heat to medium. Do not let it boil. You want to maintain the temperature at just below a simmer, where the bubbles just occasionally come up to the surface. Do not stir the shells. Stirring will muddy up the stock. As the bubbles come up to the surface a film of foam will develop on the surface. Use a large slotted spoon to skim away this foam. Let the shells cook like this for about an hour; skim the foam every few minutes. The foam comes from shells releasing impurities as their temperature increases.
3. 3 Put the thyme, bay leaves, and parsley in cheese cloth. Secure with kitchen string to make a bouquet garni.
4. 4 Once the stock has stopped releasing foam, you can add the wine, onions, carrots, celery, tomato paste, herb bouquet garni, and peppercorns. Bring to a low simmer and reduce heat so that the stock continues to simmer, but not boil, for 30 minutes. If more foam comes to the surface, skim it off. Add salt and remove from heat.
5. 5 Dampen a few layers of cheesecloth and place over a large, fine mesh strainer, over a large pot or bowl. Pour the stock into the strainer. Discard the solids. Either use the stock right away, or cool for future use. If you aren't going to use in a couple of days, freeze (remember to leave some head room at the top of your freezer container for the liquid to expand as it freezes.)
6. Makes 2-3 quarts. Reserve 4 cups for the crab bisque, refrigerate or freeze the rest.

Making the bisque - Now on to the bisque...

1. In a large, 4 or 6 quart saucepan, melt butter on medium heat, add the shallots and cook gently until translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the wine, stock, white rice, and tomato paste. Raise the heat and bring to a simmer; reduce heat to continue to simmer until rice is completely cooked, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool for several minutes.
3. Add about two thirds of the crab meat to the soup. Working in batches, ladle the soup into a blender and purée until completely smooth. Return puréed soup back to soup pan.
4. Add cream and gently heat soup until it is hot enough for serving. Add the remaining one third of the crab meat.
5. Adjust for salt and add cayenne pepper to taste (about 1/8 teaspoon cayenne).



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