Charleston She-Crab Soup

From the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory

Source
This recipe comes from GCRL Senior Scientist and Assistant Professor Emerita Harriet Perry. Harriet has studied blue crabs for her entire career as a biologist and is often fondly referred to as “The Crab Lady.” Harriet’s knowledge of blue crabs extends well beyond science and into the kitchen. This recipe for a classic she-crab soup is one of her favorites and provides a fine example of her capabilities as a cook.

Serves 4

Tips from the Cook/Biologist
The crab roe used in this recipe and others is not the external fertile egg mass or “sponge” formed on the underside of the female blue crab after spawning. (Mississippi regulations prohibit harvesting female crabs with visible external eggs.) Crab roe for cooking consists of eggs from inside the body of the crab prior to spawning. In crabs cooked whole, it appears as a lumpy orange material. Seafood markets seldom carry crab roe, so you’ll probably have to cook your own crabs to obtain it. The crumbled yolk of boiled chicken eggs is a fine substitute.

The scientific name of the blue crab is Callinectes sapidus, which translates to “beautiful delicious swimmer,” a very appropriate description.

Ingredients
- 2 cups jumbo-lump or lump crab meat
- 1 pint milk
- 1 pint cream
- 1/2 stick butter
- 1/4 cup grated onion
- 1/4 tsp. mace
- 1/4 tsp. white pepper
- Salt to taste
- 4 Tbs. cooked crab roe or crumbled yellow from chicken eggs (1 Tbs. per serving)
- 4 tsp. dry sherry (1 tsp. per serving or to taste)

Instructions
In a large, heavy pot, heat milk, cream, and butter on low heat stirring constantly with a whisk until hot. Add grated onion and heat for five minutes, again stirring with a whisk. Add spices and crab meat and simmer for five minutes; do not let boil. Crumble a small amount (1 Tbs.) of cooked crab roe in the bottom of individual soup bowls and fill with soup. Add 1 tsp. dry sherry and serve immediately.
This is the second in a series of recipes that highlight the wealth of delicious local seafood ingredients available on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. Do you have a family favorite? Get in touch; perhaps we can add it to the collection.

Look for more Mississippi seafood recipes on the web at [www.usm.edu/gcrl/public/recipes](http://www.usm.edu/gcrl/public/recipes)

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