

What's Cookin': How to kill a lobster humanely

First to tell you a bit of lobster trivia...Lobsters are members of the crustacean family. They are related to the crayfish, crawfish and crab and they are found in cold seas. Lobsters are blue to greenish in colour when fresh, then once cooked, they turn red.

Female lobsters are generally heavier and considered better value than a male of the same size and most gourmets will say they have better flavour.

Lobsters have a thick shell and a small pointed head



with long red antennae. The abdomen has seven sections, terminating in a fan shaped tail. The first pair of claws, which are full of meat, end in large powerful pincers (which I can personally vouch for having met up with

more than one lobster missing its protective rubber claw band in my time).

The thorax has a creamy substance (which is the liver) and female lobsters often have a coral (red) often used in the sauces served with lobster. The abdomen is filled with dense-textured white meat.

In order to catch these delicacies of the sea, lobster traps are used— we've all seen them hanging on restaurant walls, but they are also known as lobsterpots. So, if someone tells you they caught a lobster in their lobsterpot, banish the visions of them standing in shallow water brandishing their stockpot and waiting for the lobster to walk right into it. Lobsters are caught in different depths of water depending on the season, anywhere from 18 feet to 300 feet.

The traps or lobsterpots, have funnels of twine, leading to a baited area to allow the lobster entry. However, there is also escape areas or vents to allow young specimens to escape.

According to the British Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, lobsters can be humanely killed by putting them in a plastic bag in the freezer for two hours. The lobster will gradually lose consciousness and die. It can then be plunged into boiling water.

If a freezer is unavailable, make sure that at least one gallon of water per lobster is boiling fast over a fierce heat before plunging the lobster in head first, ensuring it is totally immersed. Hold it under the water with wooden spoons for at least two minutes. The lobster should die within 15 seconds. At this point you can either continue cooking the lobster in the boiling water or you can remove it to prepare on the grill or in a recipe.

If you are not interested in performing this part of lobster cookery, many grocery stores will cook your live lobster for you right there in the store and then you can take it home.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Lobster Salad

Serves 2-4

Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked lobster (1 small lobster)
- 1 tbsp fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 tsp salt
- dash freshly ground black pepper
- mixed salad greens
- peeled, quartered avocado

Method

1. Sprinkle lobster with lemon juice.
2. Add celery, salt and pepper.
3. Gently stir in mayonnaise.
4. Chill thoroughly.
5. Arrange lobster salad on top of a bed of mixed greens with sliced avocado (optional) on top to garnish if you like.



Cook's Note: you can also use this mixture to fill toasted buns for a delicious sandwich or you can spread generously on a slice of crustless toast, then sprinkle some grated gruyere cheese on top and grill for a few minutes until cheese is melted and bubbly.

Email your questions and comments at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com

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