CATANESE CLASSICS

Clam, Hardshell

ABOUT

These clams are rarely sold by the name “hardshell” or “quahog,” but instead are sold by names reflecting size (1 1/2 to 5 inches), from littlenecks to cherrystones, topnecks and chowders. On the West Coast, Manila clams and Washington steamer clams are sometimes called littlenecks, though they aren’t in this hardshell family. Hardshells are the most valuable U.S. clam species, sold mostly live in bags. The clams are slow growers. Littlenecks — the most tender, most expensive and most sought-after — are 2 to 3 years old. Cherry-stones are 5 to 6 years old. Large chowder clams can be 30 years old. Hardshells are found from the Canadian Maritimes to the Gulf of Mexico in bays, coves and salty estuaries. The major U.S. harvest is taken between Massachusetts and Florida. The clams are harvested by scissors-like tongs with wire-mesh bottoms and by hand rakes and hydraulic dredges. They are also farm-raised along the East Coast.

PRODUCT PROFILE

Hardshells are the connoisseur’s choice for raw, halfshell clams. They are mild-flavored, sweet and briny. Cooked hardshells are soft, juicy and mild. Raw meat should be tender-crisp and plump, ranging in color from ivory to golden yellow, with some dark areas. Cooked meat is pale, pinkish-white.Hardshells have an off-white, oval, symmetrical shell with a purple or violet border inside. Discard clams with open or broken shells.

COOKING TIPS

Enjoy raw on the halfshell, fried or steamed. In soup, add minced clams at the simmer stage, steep 5 minutes and serve. Cherrystones are sometimes eaten raw but more often are broiled, chopped for chowder or baked in dishes like clams casino. Large hardshells are stuffed or used in chowders, clam cakes and similar dishes. Whole, frozen clams must be served immediately upon thawing. If they are allowed to warm up, bacteria growth is rapid.



NUTRITION FACTS

Calories	74
Fat Calories	8 g.
Total Fat	0.9 g.
Saturated Fat	0.2 g.
Cholesterol	34 mg.
Sodium	56 mg.
Protein	12.7 g.
Omega 3	0.2 g.

PRIMARY PRODUCT FORMS

Fresh: Meats
Frozen: IQF halfshell, Whole, Meats
Value-added: Canned, Stuffed, Cakes

GLOBAL SUPPLY

Canada, United States

COOKING METHODS

✓ Bake	Boil	Broil	Fry	Grill
Pate	✓ Poach	✓ Saute	Smoke	✓ Steam