CATANESE CLASSICS

Crab, Blue

ABOUT

Male crabs, blue claws; ("Jimmies") and immature females, orange claws; ("Sallies") may be taken as hardshells when their carapace measures 5 inches. There are no size limits on mature female crabs ("sooks"). Blue crab is sold in both hardshell and softshell forms. Peeler crabs are those taken just before molting; softshell crabs are those harvested right afterward. The crabs are harvested with traps, nets and dredges. Blue crabs are found in brackish estuaries and bays from Cape Cod to the Gulf of Mexico. The largest concentration is in Chesapeake and Delaware bays off Maryland and Virginia. North Carolina and Louisiana have blue-crab fisheries as well. The same sapidus species is found in Central and South America, which supply crabmeat to the U.S. market. Blue swimming crab from the Portunus genus is imported from Southeast Asia, primarily as pasteurized meat.

PRODUCT PROFILE

Meat of the blue crab has a rich, sweet, succulent and buttery flavor. The body meat is delicately flavored, while claw meat is nutty. Softshells offer a crunchy texture, since they are eaten shell and all. Cooked shells of blue crabs turn orange-red. Body meat is white, tender and flaky. Claw meat has a brownish tint, which is natural. Pasteurized meat is firmer and darker than fresh crab meat. Fresh blue-crab meat should have a mild aroma; pasteurized should have a slight, "heated" aroma.

COOKING TIPS

Live crabs can be steamed or boiled and eaten straightaway or used in sauces or salads. Fried crab cakes, made with picked meat, bread crumbs, butter and seasoning, are a traditional favorite. Softshells are best sautéed, broiled or grilled at high heat, so shells become crisp. They're often fried and served in sandwiches.



NUTRITION FACTS

Calories	87
Fat Calories	10 g.
Total Fat	1.1 g.
Saturated Fat	0.2 g.
Cholesterol	78 mg.
Sodium	293 mg.
Protein	18.1 g.
Omega 3	0.3 g.

PRIMARY PRODUCT FORMS

Live: Hardshells, Softshells
Fresh: Whole (dressed hardshells), Whole (dressed softshells), Picked meat
Frozen: Whole (dressed softshells), Cooked meat, Blocks, Claws, Cocktail claws
Value-added: Cakes, Stuffed, Pasteurized meat

GLOBAL SUPPLY

China, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Thailand, United States, Venezuela, Vietnam

COOKING METHODS

- [ ] Bake
- [x] Boil
- [x] Broil
- [x] Fry
- [x] Grill
- [ ] Pate
- [ ] Poach
- [x] Saute
- [ ] Smoke
- [x] Steam