

Cook up a potful of fish stew or chowder

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to see that they've been kept cold and moist. When clams and mussels are cleaned they will automatically open their shells. If they don't, they were dead when you bought them and should be discarded.

The New England Scallop Chowder recipe accompanying this article also is simple to prepare. When buying scallops, prefer the smaller bay scallops because of their sweetness. Fresh bay scallops, as well as sea scallops, can be interchanged in a re-

cipe. After purchasing, rinse them well to remove any sand particles and trim the beard. Spilled scallops will cook a very strong sulfurous odor.

AFTER SELECTING the fish, refrigerate it in the coldest part of the refrigerator. As a general rule it's best to use the fish the day it's purchased or within two days. Most chowder recipes call for fillet pieces or chunks of fish. If these pieces are between one and two inches they will

cook in five to 10 minutes in a simmering broth.

Avoid a rolling boil because it will cause the fish to fall apart. When reheating any fish soup, do so gently. Avoid lots of stirring. Gently bring to a boil and quickly reduce to low, or remove from the heat.

The fun of making a fish chowder for a luncheon or supper is that the soup generally becomes the focal point of the meal and its accompaniments should be simple. Crunchy bread or corn muffins, along with a

mixed vegetable salad, will suffice.

For heartier appetites you may want to serve a cheese tray with *quiche, forcemeat* or a gratin garnished with grapes, melon or strawberries, depending upon the season. If you're entertaining, you want to add dessert to the menu. A country pie or cake such as a carrot loaf or caramel custard will complement the meal better than an elaborate torte or pastries.

Looking for a more unusual fish stew for a weekend dinner? The Can-

tonese Hot Pot has been popular for hundreds of years. In the recently published "New Cantonese Cooking," Eileen Yin-Fei Lo has re-created this classic with a new twist, adding scallops, clams and oysters.

A fish broth needs to be prepared in advance, but the rest of the meal is prepared at the table — everyone takes a turn and prepares his or her own. This one-pot supper blends easily into a simple menu. The author suggests Water Dumplings, Cauliflower Salad and Sliced Fresh Pine-

apple to complement the hot pot.

Not many seafood cookbooks have been published recently. One of the latest is a paperback, "The Great American Seafood Cookbook" by Susan Hermann Loomis (Workman Publishing, 1988, \$12.95). More than just recipes, it offers advice on cleaning, storing, freezing and cooking all kinds of fish. Especially impressive is a lexicon describing the varieties of fish, their availability and what to use as a substitute when a certain fish is out of season.

PROVENçal FISH STEW

Serves 4
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium carrots, peeled, sliced
1 medium leek, white part only, sliced, rinsed
1 medium onion, peeled, sliced
2 large garlic cloves, finely minced
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, quartered
1 quart vegetable or fish stock
1/2 shrimp, shelled, deveined, rinsed
1/2 mussels, scrubbed
1/4 pound mixed fish fillets (at least three varieties, such as scrod, sole, catfish)
1 teaspoon finely chopped basil or 1 teaspoon prepared pesto
pinch dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste

Heat olive oil in a large, heavy Dutch oven. Add sliced leek, onion and garlic, tossing over medium-high heat until onion and leek are translucent. Add sliced carrots, tomato and stock. Bring to a boil and simmer until carrots are tender.
Cut fish fillets into 2-inch-by-2-inch pieces. Rinse and add fish and mussels to simmering soup. Reduce temperature and allow fish to cook gently for 10 minutes. Check fish for doneness. Adjust seasonings and serve hot.

NEW ENGLAND SCALLOP CHOWDER

Serves 4
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 medium leeks, white part only, sliced
2 large cloves garlic, finely minced
2 1/2 cups warm vegetable stock or vegetable bouillon
2 medium potatoes, peeled, sliced
1/4 pound sea or bay scallops, rinsed, sliced
1/4 cup cooked corn kernels
1/4 teaspoon thyme
salt and pepper to taste
Optional: 1/4 tablespoon potato starch mixed in two tablespoons cold water

In a heavy saucepan heat butter. Add minced garlic and leeks. Toss over medium heat until translucent. Add potatoes and stock to pot. Continue to cook over medium high heat until potatoes are soft and falling apart. Remove from heat and puree soup. Return to saucepan, adding thyme and seasoning. Add sliced scallops and corn and heat until scallops are cooked, 5-10 minutes depending upon the thickness of the scallops. To thicken the chowder, mix potato starch in cold water, add to soup. Stir constantly and return soup to a boil. Serve hot. To reheat, gently heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat immediately.

SEAFOOD HOT POT

A classic Cantonese dish with a twist, from "New Cantonese Cooking" by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo, 1988, Viking Publishers, \$19.95.
1 pound sea scallops, sliced 1/4-inch thick
1/4 pound shrimp (30 shrimp), shelled, deveined, washed and dried
24 oysters, removed from their shells
24 clams, removed from their shells
1/4 pound fillet of halibut, thinly sliced
4 ounces bean thread noodles (two packages soaked in hot water for 30 minutes, then cut into 6-inch strands)
8 cakes fresh bean curd, cut into 1/4 inch slices
1 pound fresh spinach, old leaves removed, stalks separated, washed

three or four times to remove sand and drained
2 bunches watercress, washed and drained
4 cups fish broth
4 cups cold water
1 piece fresh ginger, 2 inches by 1 1/2 inches
2 large garlic cloves, peeled

Each ingredient — seafood, noodles, bean curd or vegetable — should be placed in its own plate or bowl arranged around a hot pot (available at Asian markets) or an electric fry pan.

Heat two cups of the fish broth and two cups of the water together in a frypan. Add the ginger and garlic. Bring to a boil.

Place the fish, seafood or vegetable of your choice in the broth. The use of strainerlike spoons fashioned of wire is suggested. (These are available in Asian markets), or use a slotted spoon. Eat at will, dipping your cooked foods into the Vinegar Soy Sauce or Ginger Soy Sauce.

Keep replenishing the fish broth with water. When the fish and vegetables have been consumed, spoon the broth into small bowls and drink it.

VINEGAR SOY SAUCE

Mix in a bowl:
2 tablespoons chicken broth

1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1/2 teaspoon hot pepper oil
1 tablespoon finely sliced scallions.

GINGER SOY SAUCE

Mix in a bowl:
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 tablespoon minced ginger
2 tablespoons minced scallions, white part only
2 teaspoons sesame oil

1/4 teaspoons sugar.

Divide sauces into individual sauce dishes and serve with hot pot.

FISH BROTH

From "Cantonese Cooking" by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo
Makes 8 cups
10 pounds fish heads and bones washed well to cold running water
4 quarts cold water
2 pounds onions, peeled and quartered
2 celery stalks, cut in halves
6 scallions, washed, dried with ends

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