



Clams Casino Appetizer

Serves 4

Ingredients

12 hard-shell clams (top neck), scrubbed

2 Tbs. unsalted butter

1/2 cup finely chopped red bell pepper

1/3 cup finely chopped shallot

1/4 cup dry white wine or vermouth

1/2 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs

1/4 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Freshly ground black pepper

3 slices bacon, sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick

Lemon wedges, for serving

Directions:

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the broiler on high.

Arrange the clams on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet. Broil until they open, 5 to 7 minutes, removing each clam with tongs as it opens and transferring it to a clean rimmed baking sheet to cool. Once all the clams have opened, collect any spilled clam juice from the first baking sheet in a measuring cup.

When the clams are cool enough to handle, discard the top shells: Pick up a clam; holding the bottom shell and keeping the clam level, twist off the top shell. Arrange the opened clams on the baking sheet. Run a spoon underneath each clam to loosen it from its bottom shell. Distribute the reserved clam juice among the clams.

Melt the butter in an 8-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the bell pepper and shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the wine and cook until the liquid is reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and stir in the breadcrumbs, Parmigiano, parsley, and a few grinds of black pepper. (Do not season with salt.)

Spoon some of the breadcrumb mixture onto each clam. Top each with a tangle of bacon strips. Broil the clams until the topping is just browned, about 5 minutes. Serve with the lemon wedges or squeeze the wedges over the clams before serving.