

New England Seafood Chowder

Fresh White Fish	½ lb. per person (Haddock is best. Cod is fine. Snapper is OK.), the thickest cut possible. Use less fish if you plan to add some combination of scallops, baby shrimp and small chunks of Maine lobster, perhaps a handful of each
Russet Potatoes	1 per person plus 2 or 3 for the pot, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes. Place in a bowl of cold water so they don't turn brown as they wait their turn in the chowder.
Yellow Onions	½ per person, quartered and sliced very thin in crescent shapes
Clam Juice	One 8 oz. bottle per person
Evaporated Milk	12 oz. cans – about ¾ can per bottle of clam juice (Low-fat is fine but don't use the non-fat, which tastes weird.).
Butter	About 1 tbsp. per person
Salt Pork	1 package. Or, use butter or light olive oil (not virgin)

Prepare one day before serving to allow flavors to meld.

Remove and discard the hard rind of the salt pork. Dice the salt pork and sauté in a heavy Dutch oven, stirring frequently and watching closely to prevent burning, until golden brown. Turn off the heat and use a slotted spoon to remove the bits of cooked salt pork, leaving the fat in the pan. Drain the diced, cooked salt pork on paper towels and set aside. If the fat has darkened, remove any black bits.

In the pork fat (or butter or olive oil), cook the onions slowly over medium heat until clear and very soft. **Don't let them brown.** Use the slotted spoon to remove the onions, draining off the fat, and set aside.

Wash and dry the fish. Wrap tightly in waxed paper, parchment or plastic, and cool in the freezer for 15 to 20 minutes. Cold fish is less likely to fall apart in chowder—but **don't let it freeze.**

While the fish is chilling, drain the cubed potatoes and add them to the hot fat, stirring to coat. Add the clam juice and bring to a gentle boil. When the potatoes are cooked but not falling apart, turn down to simmer. Mix in the onions and butter.

Gently lay the fish (and any other uncooked seafood) on top of the hot mixture. Cover for about three minutes or just until the fish is cooked through. Add the milk and any cooked seafood, such as lobster meat. Reheat but **never, ever boil once the milk has been added.**

Cool and refrigerate overnight. To reheat a big pot of chowder, allow an hour on a very low burner, stirring as little as possible but occasionally scraping the bottom with a spoon to prevent scorching. The chowder is ready when tiny bubbles start rising to the surface. Heat the bowls. Serve with sweet pickles and pilot crackers, common crackers, and/or oyster crackers. Place the cooked minced salt pork in a small bowl on the table so diners can sprinkle a few salty bits on top of their chowder.