

Grilled Clams with Pancetta in Lime Butter Hot Sauce

Serves 6:

Ingredients

4 dozen littleneck clams
2 tablespoons flour or corn starch
8 ounces pancetta, cut in 2 thick slices
4 to 5 garlic cloves, finely minced
1 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
2 sticks unsalted butter
2 to 3 limes, juiced
3 tablespoons hot sauce, preferably Frank's
1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce

Preparation

Scrub clams well and cover with cold water in a large bowl.
Sprinkle with flour or corn starch, which will cause clams to "cough up" any sand or grit.

Prep Lime Butter Hot Sauce: finely mince garlic and chop a bunch of fresh cilantro.
Slowly melt butter in a small saucepan over low heat.
Whisk in garlic, fresh lime juice, hot sauce and worcestershire sauce.
Taste to make sure the flavor is balanced; add a pinch of salt, if needed.
Keep warm until ready to use.

Preheat a charcoal or gas grill.
Drain clams, rinse and dry.
Place thick pancetta slices on hot grill and spread out shellfish next to it.
Clams will pop open their shells as they cook; remove from fire, being careful not to spill juices.
Place cooked clams in a large bowl; discard any that don't open.
When pancetta slices cook and caramelize on one side, flip them over to cook on the other side.
Place on a cutting board and dice; toss with clams in bowl.

Pour reserved butter sauce over grilled clams and diced pancetta.
Scatter chopped cilantro over all and give everything a good toss.
Serve with warm baguette or peasant bread to dip in sauce.