

Cracking Crab Salad

I love crabs. They have always been one of my favorites to eat. No one seems to mind the mess. In fact, I've often suspected the big piles of empty shells are a serious crab eater's visual proof. There's lots of noise made about which picking method you use, and whether or not the use of mallets is permitted. You learn young, too. About the only people who get their crabs cleaned and presented to them are the newly-dating or very small children. After that, you're on your own. If you've never tasted a fresh, steamed crab, put your squeamishness aside and seek them out. You're in for quite a treat. If you want to sound like a pro, read up on the proper Crab Vocabulary first so you'll know the difference between peelers and soft shells.

Okay, okay...so what else can one do with a crab?

Well, quite a wee bit actually. If you're very patient and you have fresh crabs available, you can spend a couple of hours picking but not eating them. For me, this definitely requires a beer. Put all the meat in a bowl and make crab cakes or any of the tasty dishes below, requiring fresh crab meat. This is much more economical than purchasing picked crabmeat, but it does take time. If you are buying packed meat, there are three varieties: Backfin, the Choicest Special, Everything but Backfin, Claws and the cheaper meat from the "legs." I love the taste of claw meat, so don't hesitate to purchase it for crab cakes. You may also find that crabs you have picked yourself are much cleaner than what you find packed, so be careful to look for bits of shells in the purchased variety. However you find it, dig in. Three ounces of cooked crabmeat contain only two grams of fat.

This is my favorite Crab salad recipe! Once you taste it, you won't go back to the mayo kind!

- 1 garlic clove
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks
- 5 large basil leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons Sherry Vinegar
- 1 pound lump crab meat
- 1 mango, peeled and chopped into cubes
- 8 Poppadom (available at Indian grocery stores). Cook to packet directions.

Combine garlic, shallot, tomato, basil, oil and vinegar in blender and puree. Add some salt and pepper and taste. (It's lovely, isn't it?) Place crab meat in bowl; add enough dressing to moisten it. Add diced mango and serve on a crisp Poppadom. Enjoy!