

Menu Du Jour

07 Jul 2004

New England Clam Chowder
Clam Fritters with Chipotle Aioli

New England Clam Chowder

4 slices smoked bacon
1 medium yellow onion, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
2 large Red Bliss potatoes, diced
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 (48-ounce) can sea clam juice
2 1/2 cups chopped clams
1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme
1/4 teaspoon dried dill weed
1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
1 cup heavy cream
1 – 1 1/2 cups half & half
Kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste
Oyster crackers

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon and drain on paper towels. Chop bacon into small pieces and return two chopped slices to the skillet; reserve remaining bacon for garnish. Add the butter, onion, and celery to the skillet. Cook until the onions are translucent, about six minutes. Add the flour and cook for two to three minutes, stirring frequently.

Transfer the mixture to a stock pot and add clam juice. Stirring often, bring to a low boil. Add potatoes and cook until potatoes are tender, about ten minutes. Season with thyme, dill weed, and marjoram.

Add the heavy cream and one cup of half & half. Return to a low simmer and add clams. Cook for three to four minutes. (Do not overcook the clams or they will become tough.)

Season to taste with kosher salt and cracked black pepper. Add more half & half, if necessary, for desired consistency. Serve piping hot with oyster crackers and garnish with reserved cracklings.

Menu Du Jour



Clam Fritters

1 cup all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
4 dozen Cherrystone clams, shucked and chopped
2 large eggs
1/3 cup clam juice (reserved from clams)
1/4 cup milk
1 tablespoon melted butter
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Vegetable oil for frying
Cajun spice

Sift together the flour, baking soda and baking powder in a large mixing bowl. Whisk in the eggs, clam juice, milk, butter, and cayenne pepper. Blend until the mixture is smooth. Add the chopped parsley and chopped clams. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Using a deep fryer or heavy skillet, heat oil to 350° F. When oil is hot, spoon one heaping tablespoon of the fritter mixture into the oil. Fry until golden on one side, turn and continue frying about another two minutes. Drain on paper towels and season with Cajun spice, if desired.

(Fritters may be held in a 300° F. oven for up to 20 minutes until service.)

Yield: About 20 fritters

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Chipotle Aioli

While this aioli could be prepared in the traditional method with egg yolks, using mayonnaise allow the aioli to be refrigerated for up to a week and reduces any risk from raw eggs.

1/2 cup good-quality mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
1 1/2 teaspoons dried Chipotle powder
1 teaspoon chopped fresh cilantro
Kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste

In a medium mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Refrigerate at least one hour before serving.

Plate presentation

