

## New England Clam Chowder

Five 6.5-oz. cans chopped clams	1 bay leaf
¼ pound chunk bacon	2 teaspoons fresh thyme
1 large onion	2 teaspoons dried savory
2 celery stalks	1 cup heavy cream
2 small leeks	2 tablespoons chopped parsley
⅓ scant cup flour	Sea salt to taste
2 8-oz. bottles clam juice	Pepper to taste
1½ pounds red bliss potatoes	

Chop the bacon into small dice. In a large Dutch oven, cook the bacon over low heat until it renders all the fat. If the bacon is very lean and renders little fat, add a tablespoon or two of vegetable oil, which you will need to cook the vegetables. Raise heat a bit to brown the bacon pieces. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon to a side dish, leaving the fat in the pot.

While the bacon is cooking, cut off the dark green parts of the leeks, saving only the light green and the white parts. Cut a 2-inch cross in the greener end, and wash thoroughly under cold running water, separating the layers to be sure all the sand is removed.

Chop the onion, the celery, and the leeks until rather fine. Add the vegetables to the bacon fat and cook several minutes over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are softened.

In the meantime, drain the canned clams in a sieve over a large bowl, saving the liquid.

Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables, stirring for a couple minutes until the flour begins to color. Gradually whisk the in the reserved clam juice, as well as the bottled clam juice, simmering until the mixture begins to thicken slightly. Add the reserved bacon pieces, along with the bay leaf, the thyme, and the savory.

In the meantime, peel and cut the potatoes into a very small dice. Add them to the simmering liquid. Cook until the potatoes are tender, but still hold their shape.

Whisk in the heavy cream, then stir in the chopped clams and the parsley. Return to the simmer. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve as is or with oyster crackers.