



Hard Clam: *Mercenaria mercenaria*

Market Forms:.....Live in the shell, fresh shucked (in pint or quart containers), canned, frozen.

Size:Size varies according to grade:
Chowders4-6 inches in width
Cherrystones3-4 inches
Top Necks2 1/2 to 3 inches
Middle Necks2 to 2 1/2 inches
Little Necks1 1/2 - 2 inches

Taste/texture:.....Flavorful, slightly salty. Generally, the larger the clam, the chewier. The chowder clam, as the name implies, is best suited for chowders, fritters or stuffing. The smaller cherrystones are popular in clambakes or steamed. The smallest little necks are delicious raw or steamed on the half shell.

Seasonality:Year round.

Nutritional Value:74 Calories (100 grams, 3.5 oz.)
12.8% Protein
.6% Fat
.14% Omega-3

Substitutability:The clam has a very distinctive taste and texture not easily replaced; its closest cousin in flavor is the conch.

Folklore:Also commonly known as the “quahog”, the clam was first used for barter as a form of money or “wampum.” It was probably valued above other shells because of the dark purple inside the shell.

Harvesting:Hard clams are commercially harvested by day boats using hand and patent tongs.

Safety/Quality:Virginia’s waters and products are regulated by federal and state agencies including the FDA, the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, insuring that only safe wholesome seafood reaches our customers.