

Clams with Cream, Farro, and Baby Kale

By cheese1227

When I make clams I want the dish to feel more like a whole meal so I add a cooked grain and some greens to the mix. This idea was not my own, but one I have borrowed from chefs Chad Conley (formerly of Hugo's and Gather in Maine and Jean-Georges in New York) and Greg Mitchell (Gramercy Tavern and Reynard in New York) who man the stoves at the refurbished Palace Diner (<http://www.palacedinerme.com/>) in Biddeford, Maine. They routinely mix shellfish with things like fregola sarda and bitter greens. I think I have come pretty close to recreating the clam, farro, and kale dish I ate there a couple of weeks ago. They used mahogany clams, but I run with a mix of my favorite hard shells: cherrystones and littlenecks.

Serves 4 for dinner

- Olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1/2 cup clam juice
- 2 dozen cherrystone clams, scrubbed
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt and white pepper
- 2 dozen littleneck clams, scrubbed
- 2 cups cooked farro
- 2 cups washed baby kale leaves
- Sea salt
- Chili oil

1. In a 10-inch skillet, heat 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add chopped shallots and cook for 2 to 3 minutes to soften. Add crushed garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add clam juice and bring to a steady simmer. Carefully scatter the cherrystone clams into the pan and cover. Cook until most of the clams have opened, between 5 and 7 minutes. Discard any clams that have not opened.
2. Meanwhile, in a 4-quart sauce pan, heat cream and season it with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/4 teaspoon white pepper. Add littleneck clams to the simmering cream and cover. Cook until most of the clams have opened, between 3 and 5 minutes. Discard any clams that have not opened.
3. Split both types of clams between four bowls. Return the skillet used to cook the cherrystones to the stove over low heat, add farro to heat it through. Turn off the heat and fold in the baby kale leaves. Stir in cream used to cook littleneck clams.
4. Split farro and kale between the bowls. Pour sauce over the clams. Finish with a swirl of chili oil and a sprinkle of sea salt.