

Title:

Blue Crabs Get No Respect

Word Count:

569

Summary:

Thank goodness for the lowly blue crab.

What would our epicurean lives be without this deliciously savory crustacean. Yet often they do not get the respect they deserve.

These small bluish crustaceans are harvested from the mid Atlantic region crab fishery in Chesapeake Bay to Florida and along the Gulf states as far west as Texas. In its scientific name, calli is Greek for "beautiful", nectes for "swimmer", and sapidus is Latin for "savory".

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Keywords:

blue, crabs, savory, tasty, crustacean, soft, shell, meat, seafood, lovers

Article Body:

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Most crabs, except the luxurious King Crab, live out their meek and humble lives in the shadow of the lobster, the king of seafood. Yet for those in the know, that is ok because that just means more for us, right? Seriously, where would 'imperial' be without blue crab meat and delicious 'Maryland Style' be without tender and tasty blue crabs? Ah yes, many nights spent in bittersweet joy, after having your fill at the dinner table with those lowly crustaceans. Slurping, picking and dipping those juicy morsels through butter, old bay, or whatever seasonings you prefer, all the while feeling so sorry for those pitiful crabs

that get no respect.

Let's pick on the blue crab some more shall we? All puns intended and accepted.

Some will say that they hate to pick out the meat because it is so much work for very little crab meat. Well in a way their complaint is justified. Typically the blue crab will yield only 10% to 15% of it's body weight in crab meat. The crabs grow by molting or shedding their shell and growing back a larger one. Just prior to molting, the crab will be encased in both the soft, new shell which is forming underneath the hard old shell. The formation of a new shell is evident along the margins of the swimming paddles of a crab. The crab is referred to as a "peeler" or "shedder". Immediately after the molt, the crab's new shell is soft, pliable and easily stretched. At this time the crab would be referred to as a " soft shelled crab". Many crab lovers will only eat a soft shell, which is simply a delightful dish when lightly tossed in flour and pan fried.

Types of Crabmeat:

- Lump is from the largest pieces of meat from the body, adjacent to the backfin and is the most expensive form of crabmeat.
- Backfin is the white body meat including lump and large flakes and is used for crab cakes and crab imperial.
- Special are flakes of white body meat other than lump and is used for crab cakes, soups, dips and casseroles.
- Claw meat is brownish meat from the claws and is best for dips and soups.

Some more Blue Crab facts:

- Callinectes sapidus means "Beautiful swimmer that is savory".
- Crabs reach maturity in 12 to 18 months.
- Few crabs live longer than 3 years.
- The largest crab recorded from Maryland was a male measuring 9 inches; however bigger crabs (10-11 inches) have been captured.
- The annual harvest of hard crabs from Chesapeake Bay accounts for over 50% of total U.S. landings.
- Cannibalism of young blue crabs by larger crabs is common and may regulate population abundance.
- A spring-spawned crab can reach a size of 2½ inches by their first winter.

Serve and enjoy blue crabs at your next party or cook-out and guarantee yourself

the adoration of an appreciative group of seafood lovers. Finally, don't feel sorry for the blue crab, they get more respect than they know.