

Lobster Techniques

by Pam Anderson

Because lobsters are often special occasion food, most of us don't work with them often enough to get comfortable handling them. The result is that for many people, preparing a lobster can be overwhelming and eating it can be intimidating. The following step-by-step illustrations are meant to put the cook and diner at ease.

To Prepare a Lobster for Roasting



1. With the blade of a chef's knife facing the head, kill the lobster by plunging the knife into the body at the point where the shell forms a "T." Move the blade down until it touches the head.



2. Turn the lobster over, then, holding the upper body with one hand and positioning the knife blade so it faces the tail end, cut through the body toward the tail, making sure not to cut all the way through the shell.



3. Move your hand down to the lower body and continue cutting through the tail.



4. Holding half of the tail in each hand, crack, but do not break, the back shell to butterfly the lobster.



5. Use a spoon to remove and discard the stomach sac.



6. Remove and discard the intestinal tract.



7. Remove and discard the green tomalley if you wish.



8. Run a skewer up one side of the lobster tail to keep it from curling during cooking.

Hard or Soft

Hard-shell lobsters are much meatier than soft-shell (see “How to Buy, Cook, and Serve a Lobster,” page 14). To determine whether a lobster is hard-shell or soft-shell, squeeze the side of the lobster’s body; a soft-shell lobster will yield to pressure while a hard-shell will be hard, brittle, and tightly packed.



How to Eat a Lobster (or Remove Cooked Meat)



1. Twist the tail to separate it from the body.



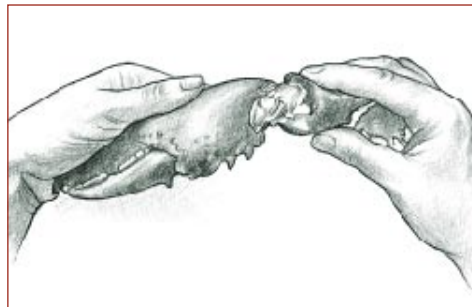
2. Twist off the tail flippers.



3. Use a fork or your finger to push the tail meat up and out through the wide end of the tail. Pull the tail meat out the other end.



4. Twist a claw appendage off the body.



5. Twist the claw from the connecting joint.



6. Remove the pincher portion of the claw. If you use a gentle motion, the meat will often stay attached to the rest of the claw; otherwise, you'll need a cocktail fork to pick out the meat from the shell.



7. If the lobster is a soft-shell, use your hands to break open the claw and remove the meat.



8. If the lobster is a hard-shell, use lobster crackers to break open the claw and remove the meat.



9. Crack open the connecting joint and remove the meat with a cocktail fork. Repeat steps 5 through 9 with the remaining claw.