



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SEPTEMBER BRINGS NEW OYSTER SEASON

If the oyster were capable of reading the calendar or undergoing the same apprehensions that worry ^{WA} human beings, this lowly shellfish would probably look on the first of September as we view an engagement with the dentist or the maturity of a 90-day promissory note.

For with the arrival of the first "R" month today, the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, advises housewives that the coming oyster season promises to produce a plentiful crop of this superior shellfish with its fine flavor and tang of the sea.

In Europe the oyster is, and long has been, a luxury enjoyed by the few. When the first settlers came to the shores of America one of the most impressive indications of the richness of the new land was the great abundance, large size, and excellence of the oysters that they found.

Under these conditions, and at a time when the infant communities necessarily were dependent in a great measure on natural products for food, this readily obtainable and delicious shellfish came into common use as an important element of their diet.

Even before the white men came, the Indians of the coast subsisted largely on oysters and, it is said, used them in a dried and smoked state, strung on twigs, as an article of barter with their upland neighbors. At many places great mounds of shells deposited in prehistoric times tell of the free use that the red man made of oysters.

Each fall and winter marks the decrease of tens of millions of oysters which are unceremoniously snagged from their peaceful existence in the watery depths to enjoy the place of honor at thousands of banquets, church suppers, family dinners, and gala occasions.

From coast to coast, famous seafood restaurants feature oysters and vie in trying to produce a "supreme" concoction for their clientele.

Down New Orleans way, for example, the world-famous Antoine's, in the old French Quarter, makes a specialty of Oysters Rockefeller. And here's the story of their origin as told in Gourmet's Guide to New Orleans.

"When Jules Alciatore, of Antoine's, first offered his new dish, with just pride, for a group of his most favored patrons, one of them exclaimed: 'Mon dieu, how rich! How are they called?' At that time the world was blinking its best at Rockefeller's new millions, so with quick wit the noted chef retorted, 'Rich, are they? Eh bien, oysters Rockefeller you have!'"

This dish is not too intricate to be prepared at home. Here's an excellent recipe.

Oysters Rockefeller

4 dozen oysters in half shell

Sauce: 8 slices cooked bacon
2 cups cooked spinach
3 tbsps. minced parsley
6 celery hearts
2 green onion tops
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. paprika
6 tbsps. lemon juice
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 cup butter, melted
4 tbsps. cracker crumbs

Heat a 1-inch layer of rock salt in pans and arrange oysters in the half shell over the salt. Broil under moderate heat until edges begin to curl. Prepare sauce: Chop first 5 ingredients very fine. Add remaining ingredients and heat to boiling. Pour hot sauce over each oyster, return pan to oven to brown the sauce slightly and serve at once, serving each guest a panful of oysters. The salt is used to keep the oysters hot and to hold them upright. Serves 8.
(Culinary Arts Institute)

Oysters combined with mushrooms produce an enticing "piece de resistance."
Miss Helen Robinson, home economist stationed at the Service's College Park, Md., technological laboratory, is the sponsor of this recipe.

Oysters and Mushrooms

2 lbs. of mushrooms
5 tbsps. of butter
2 tbsps. of flour
1 cup of cream
1/2 cup of cooked, finely chopped celery
1 qt. oysters
Seasoning and cayenne pepper

Peel, stem, and cut the mushrooms in pieces. Stew slowly in 2 tbsps. of butter for an hour. Ten minutes before they are done add 3 more tbsps. of butter. When melted, add 2 tbsps. of flour. Blend well. Allow mixture to simmer a little longer before adding 1 cup of cream, then add celery and oysters cut in half. Season with salt and pepper and a dash of cayenne. Heat oysters thoroughly, but do not cook.

The next time doubt enters your mind as to your choice of delicacies at a restaurant or a home meal, solve the difficulty by selecting oysters and enjoy one of the finest gastronomic treats which the sea can furnish.

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