

Mussel and Noodle Bake

2 cups (500 mL) Nova Scotia mussel meats, cooked and drained
12 oz. (375 g) thin noodles, cooked and drained
1/2 cup (125 mL) butter or margarine
1 cup (250 mL) mushrooms, sliced
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) green pepper, chopped
1/3 cup (75 mL) flour
4 cups (1 L) milk
salt and pepper to taste
3/4 cup (175 mL) dry white wine (or broth)
2 1/2 cups (625 mL) Swiss cheese, grated
paprika

Place cooked mussels and noodles in a 4-quart (4-L) casserole. In a large frying pan, melt butter and add mushrooms and green pepper, sauté until tender. Remove from heat and place vegetables in casserole. In butter remaining in the pan, blend flour, then milk. Return to low heat, add salt and pepper to taste, stir constantly until thick. Remove from heat, stir in wine (or broth) and pour sauce into casserole. Toss all ingredients to coat with sauce, sprinkle cheese on top and colour with paprika. Bake, uncovered, in preheated 350° F (180° C) oven for 45 minutes.

Makes approx. 8 servings.

Mussels Marinière

4–5 lbs. (2 kg) Nova Scotia mussels
1 celery stalk, coarsely chopped
white wine
1 clove garlic, diced
1/4 cup (60 mL) green onion, chopped
dash thyme

Scrub mussels and remove byssus thread or “beard.” Cover bottom of large pot with 1 inch (2.5 cm) of white wine, add chopped onion, celery, garlic, and thyme. Bring to a boil. Add prepared mussels to boiling liquid. Steam until mussels open, about 3–5 minutes. Discard any that do not open. Serve mussels with shells in large bowls, pouring broth over, or use meats in a favourite recipe.

Note: For a richer version of this popular dish, 1 cup (250 mL) heavy cream mixed with 2 egg yolks can be added to the strained mussel broth. Serve with crusty French bread to soak up all that lovely broth.

Makes approx. 6 appetizer servings.

Spicy Marinated Mussels (Appetizer)

6 lbs. (3 kg) Nova Scotia mussels, cleaned
1 bay leaf
1 cup (250 mL) white wine
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil until mussels are steamed open (about 3 minutes). Remove mussels, discarding any that do not open. When cool, shuck mussels and place meats in a large serving dish. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Marinade

1/2 cup (125 mL) white wine vinegar
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp. (1 mL) salt
1/2 cup (125 mL) olive oil
dash black pepper
Combine above ingredients in an air-tight container and shake vigorously to blend. Then add:
1 small hot pepper, seeded and chopped
1/4 cup (60 mL) chopped shallots or green onions
1 small red pepper, chopped
1 small green pepper, chopped
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) minced fresh parsley
Stir well and pour over mussels. Refrigerate until 15 minutes before serving.
Makes approx. 12 servings.

NOVA SCOTIA MUSSELS

BUYING AND STORAGE TIPS
AND GREAT-TASTING RECIPES



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Nova Scotia cultivated mussels, nurtured under the watchful eye of Nova Scotia mussel farmers, are affordable gourmet seafood.

The blue mussel, a bivalve shellfish, is a member of the clam family. Usually 2 to 3 inches (5–8 cm) in length, blue mussels have elongated, triangular, blue-black coloured shells.

Good Taste, Versatility, and Nutritional Benefits

Nova Scotia mussels have a sweet, delicate taste that connoisseurs identify as a subtle flavour blend of clam and oyster.

Mussels are a versatile seafood that can be steamed, fried, baked, or microwaved. They are perfect as an appetizer or a main course and make an excellent, economical substitute in recipes calling for clams or oysters.

Mussels are a good source of protein and Omega-3 fatty acids. Proteins are the body's building blocks; while Omega-3 fatty acids play a role in reducing the risk of heart disease. Mussels are perfect for any diet as they contain only 86 kcal per 100-g (3.5-oz.) serving.

Cultivated Blue Mussels

Nova Scotia mussel farmers, through dedication and care, provide top-quality rope-hung and bottom-cultivated blue mussels. Rope-hung mussels are grown above the ocean bottom and are free of grit and pearls. Nature packages these mussels in attractive thin shells, thus giving consumers a high ratio of meat per shell.

Bottom-cultivated mussels are also farmed on approved aquaculture sites and are distinguished by their slightly thicker shells.

Determining Freshness

Mussels that are exposed to the air for any length of time will open slightly. To test for freshness, tap the mussel's shell. Cultivated mussels have a tendency to close more slowly than wild mussels, but in both cases the shells should close. Mussels that do not close should be discarded. Fresh mussels should also sound solid, not hollow, when tapped with a knife and should have a sweet ocean scent.

Buying Mussels

As noted, cultivated mussels do gape, so check before buying that they will close. Also, make sure the bag containing your mussels has airholes or is loosely closed so the mussels can breathe.

Storing Mussels

As with all fresh food, the quality of mussels is best when used immediately; however, they can be stored for five to eight days in the refrigerator. Keep them moist by covering with a wet newspaper or damp cloth. Do not store mussels in an air-tight container or in water. Mussels can also be frozen in the shell for up to six months. Simply blanch clean mussels in boiling water for about 20 seconds and pack in heavy plastic bags or containers. Seal tightly, label, and freeze immediately. To freeze cooked meats, place in freezer containers and add a 1 per cent salt solution — 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt to 1 cup (250 mL) water. Be sure to leave 1/2 inch (1 cm) headspace for expansion during freezing.

Preparing Mussels

Preparing Nova Scotia mussels for cooking is quick and easy. Cultivated mussels require very little cleaning, since they are graded and ready to use. They may require a quick rinse and inspection, and if byssus threads (sometimes called the beard) still remain, remove them with scissors or a quick tug.

The mussels are then ready to be steamed. Place the mussels in a pot with 1/2 cup (125 mL) of water or white wine. Cover pot, place on stove, and steam over moderate heat for 5–10 minutes, or until the shells open wide and the meat loosens from the shell. Discard any mussels that do not open.

Mussel juice is delicious to drink hot and is especially good if mixed with melted butter. It can also be chilled, mixed with tomato juice, and used as a party beverage.

When serving mussels as an appetizer, allow 10 to 12 mussels per person. For a main course, allow 20 to 25 mussels per person. One pound (500 g) of mussels, shucked, yields approximately 1 cup (250 mL) of mussel meats.

Mussel meats differ in colour: the creamy white meat indicates a male mussel, while females are coral in colour.

Microwave or Barbecue Them

Mussels can also be microwaved easily. Place mussels in a circle on a glass plate. Add 1/4 cup (50 mL) hot water, cover with plastic wrap (vented), and microwave on High for 3–5 minutes. Serve with broth and melted butter or in your favourite recipe.

Another enjoyable way to eat mussels is to barbecue them. Place mussels on a grill 4 inches (10 cm) from hot coals. Barbecue for 5–15 minutes or until shells open. Serve dipped in melted butter.

Italian Mussels with Linguine

5 lbs. (2.5 kg) Nova Scotia mussels
1/4 cup (60 mL) olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 onions, thinly sliced
2 cans (28 oz./796 mL) tomatoes, mashed
1 can (5.5 oz./156 mL) tomato paste
2 lemons, thinly sliced
1/8 tsp. (.5 mL) cayenne pepper
2 tsp. (10 mL) dried basil
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) oregano
1/2 tsp. (2 mL) black pepper
1 tsp. (5 mL) salt
2 cups (500 mL) red wine
2 lbs. (1 kg) linguine

Scrub and rinse mussels; remove byssus threads.

Sauté onion and garlic in oil until golden brown. Add next eight ingredients and simmer in covered pot, over low heat, for 30 minutes. Add wine and simmer uncovered for another 20 minutes.

Add mussels to sauce, cover and cook over medium high heat until mussels open (approximately 10 minutes).

Prepare linguine according to package directions, tossing with 2 Tbsp. (25 mL) olive oil to prevent sticking.

Arrange linguine on a large tray, top with cooked mussels in tomato sauce. Serve immediately.

Makes approx. 8–10 servings.

Mussel-Stuffed Mushroom Caps

12 cooked, shucked Nova Scotia mussels
12 large mushroom caps
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) butter or margarine
3 slices bacon, partially cooked and cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) lemon juice

Sauté mushroom caps in butter and lemon juice for 3–5 minutes. On each mushroom cap, place a piece of bacon and a mussel. Pour remaining butter and lemon juice mixture over the mussels. Bake in preheated 450° F (230° C) oven for 10 minutes. Serve hot.

Makes approx. 12 appetizers.

Mussel Chowder

4–5 lbs. (2 kg) Nova Scotia mussels
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) butter
3/4 cup (175 mL) onions, diced
2 Tbsp. (25 mL) flour
2 cups (500 mL) potatoes, diced
4 cups (1 L) milk
2 cups (500 mL) light cream
salt and pepper
4 strips bacon, fried crisp

Scrub mussels, trim byssus threads, steam open 1 to 2 minutes. Remove meats, strain and reserve broth. Add enough hot water to broth to make 4 cups (1 L).

Melt butter in pot, add onion, and sauté until transparent. Add flour and stir to blend thoroughly with fat, gradually add broth and water mixture, bring to a boil. Add potatoes, simmer until nearly done. Add mussels and gently stir in milk and cream; heat. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Garnish with bacon strips.

Makes approx. 6 servings.

