

# Summertime Clam Fettucine

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[Prep: 15 minutes / Cooking: 25 / TOTAL: 40 minutes]

[Serves 4 dinner sized portions]

- 1.5 lbs little neck clams [about 30]
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes rinsed and cut in half lengthwise
- 1/2 cup packed parsley rinsed and chopped
- 4 large garlic cloves peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine [I used a Pinot Grigio from California]
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon italian red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper or about 5 grinds
- 1 lb package of linguine or fettuccine [or really any long pasta that you like!]
- 1 baguette [to soak up the sauce at the end]
- Optional - 1/3 cup clam juice and or 2 fillets canned anchovies [these ingredients are not necessary but if you have them sitting around in the pantry/fridge they will help add a nice briny kick to the recipe]

Fill up a large pot with about 5 quarts of water - or until water is about 3 inches from the top. Salt generously - at least 1 tablespoon - cover and set heat to high. I always do this first so I don't have to wait around at the end for the water to boil and the pasta to cook. If the water starts to boil too soon and you aren't ready to throw in the pasta, just turn the heat down to a simmer and keep it covered - it will quickly come back to a boil later on. Also make sure that the sink is clean, or at least one side of it. When the pasta is ready you'll want to be able to put a colander in there so you can drain out the pasta water.

The clams should be in the fridge - preferably just brought home from the store and sitting in a bowl. A few things to know about clams, they should come chip free and tightly closed. If you see any clams that are open you should try tapping them - if they close they are still alive and safe to cook, if they stay open, even just a little, you should throw them out. When you are in the supermarket or seafood store you can always ask if there's a fresher batch in the back - the person helping you should also be looking for cracked or open clams. When you are ready to start prepping the meal take the clams out and fill the bowl with cold fresh water. Let them sit for 20 minutes. This will cause them to spit out any sand or grit that they have inside their shells. Most clams won't come covered in barnacles so they just need a good rinse with a firm brush right before they're cooked.

While the water is heating up you should start prepping the other ingredients. Rinse the cherry tomatoes in a strainer and slice them lengthwise. Peel and thinly slice the garlic. If peeling the garlic is a little tricky try flipping the blade of your knife so that it's plane is parallel to that of the cutting board, lay it on top of the unpeeled garlic and push down on the blade with the heel of your hand. The garlic should split and the peel will be easy to pull off. Pull off all of the parsley leaves [it's a personal preference, I don't like the taste of the stems] and roughly chop them up. Your prepping is done.

The water for the pasta should be boiling by this point [if not keep an eye out for it during the next steps]. Usually this recipe calls for linguine, but I had some fettuccine on hand. This type of pasta will take about 8 minutes to cook al dente. We want this pasta al dente [slightly undercooked so that it still has a bite to it] because we will be adding it to the sauce at the end where it will cook for a little while longer. Make sure to set the timer since it is easy to get distracted

Put a large skillet over medium-high heat [this should be at least 2 inches deep to accommodate all of the ingredients at the end]. Let it to heat up for about 1 minute and then add the 1/3 cup olive oil. Wait another minute and then add the garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook for 1 minute or wait for the garlic to turn golden. [If you have any anchovies or clam juice on hand, this is when I would add it and cook for 1 minute.] Now add the 1/2 cup dry white wine and let it cook off for another minute - the sauce at this point should be at a rolling boil. Add the cherry tomatoes, the 1 teaspoon of salt and about 5 grinds of cracked black pepper [or about 1 teaspoon]. Adjust heat down to medium and let sit for about 2 minutes stirring once or twice. Then cover and let sit for 3 minutes - you don't want too much of the tomato juice to cook off.

While you are waiting for the tomatoes to cook down a little, check on the pasta [if it's ready see directions below] and finish cleaning the clams. Take them carefully out of the water - all of the sand or grit will have settled at the bottom and you don't want to disturb it. You can lay the clams on a dishtowel next to the sink. Run cold water over them and scrub them with a coarse brush - if you don't have one you can use another dishtowel. As soon as the clams are all clean add them to the sauce and cover. They should take about 5-8 minutes to open - you should check on them a few times and can encourage the clams to open by tapping on them.

The pasta should be done by now or nearly done. I recommend reserving a little bit of the pasta water for the sauce at the end. You can do this by taking a measuring cup - or any cup with a handle - and dipping it into the water carefully, until a about a 1/3 cup collects. You may want to use a potholder to protect your hand from the steam of the boiling water. You can test the pasta by carefully spooning out a noodle [make sure to blow on it!] and biting into it. It should have just a slight bite to it, and a small whitish dot in the

center, that's the part of the pasta that isn't cooked yet. If it is ready, take the pot - be sure to use potholders since the water will let off a lot of hot steam - and slowly pour the contents into the colander in the sink. Drizzle about 1 tablespoon olive oil over the pasta and mix it around so it doesn't become stuck together. The cooked pasta can sit like this for a few minutes while the sauce is finishing up.

The drained pasta should be added to the skillet after most of the clams are open. [If by this point there are still some clams that are not open, they should be discarded.] Add the chopped parsley, a splash of olive oil, a little bit of the reserved pasta water and make sure to mix everything well. Turn down the heat a little and let simmer for another 2 minutes. This dish can be served right out of the skillet. I like to add fresh parsley, a few grinds of pepper and some flakes of sea salt right before eating it. Make sure to put a big bowl on the table to catch all the empty shells.

Also, remember that white wine that I used early on in the recipe? - now is a good time to pour a glass and enjoy with dinner...and don't forget to tear up some pieces of the baguette to help soak up some of the sauce.