

Crab (Fish & Seafood)

Interesting facts: All crabs have claws on their two front legs. All crabs have one pair of pincers and four pairs of walking legs. Crabs eat both meat and plants, making them omnivores.

How to select: When buying crab legs and claws, it's better to choose your own individual pieces instead of buying pre-packaged frozen ones. Not only will you get to inspect the crab for freshness – you can also pick the best parts. Choose the largest legs and claws possible from the display. Smell them. If they have an ammonia odor, don't buy them. Feel them. Meaty crab legs will feel heavy for their size. They should be a bright red color and fully intact at the joints. If you're buying live crabs, make sure they're alive and active. The shells should be brightly colored and intact, as should all the legs. The crabs should be heavy for their size.

How to clean and store: Refrigerated crabmeat is also available and is a great choice if you don't want to go to the trouble of picking your meat from the shells. It's available in lump (backfin) and claw meat, with the lump crabmeat being more expensive.

Most refrigerated picked crabmeat is ultra-pasteurized and will keep unopened in the coldest part of the refrigerator for months. You'll find an expiration date on the can or package. Once it's been opened, use it within five days.

Soft-shell crabs will keep up to five days after they die, but they must be kept in moist paper towels or newspapers and stored in the coldest part of your refrigerator. Keep in mind that the 5-day rule includes shipping time.

How to use: Boil, steam

Boil: Fill large stockpot or Dutch oven half full with water; add salt. Heat to boiling; add crab legs. Cook 3 to 5 minutes or just until heated. Remove with tongs to serving platter. Serve warm with melted butter.