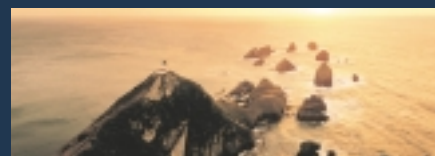


nz little neck clams

Austrovenus stutchburyi



NGĀI TAHU SEAFOOD



NEW ZEALAND LITTLENECK CLAMS

OTHER NAMES: *Austrovenus stutchburyi*, Littleneck Hard Shell Clams, Hard Shell Clams, Tuaki (Maori translation).

FORMIDABLE DELIGHTS

These clams are a delicacy in New Zealand with their sweet taste and delicate texture. They are low in calories yet rich in iron and other vitamins and minerals that are important to health. To keep them available for you, year after year, and because we get so excited about their quality, the following information introduces the history and care of these formidable delights.

HABITAT

Littleneck Clams are widespread in New Zealand waters, where they are found in beds of soft mud and coarse sand in estuaries, enclosed shores and protected beaches around all the major islands. Clams may be found from high water neap tide to sub-tidal depths of as much as 10-20m.

Clams are suspension feeders and filter passing water for their food. The Otago area where many of the clams are sourced is a pristine area offering a clean and unblemished environment to marine life and a tremendous range of seabirds. A typical clam can filter nine liters of water over a full tidal cycle so it is important that the environment remains healthy and is well managed.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Ngai Tahu indigenous people of New Zealand have relied on Littleneck Clams for centuries as a food source. Even today, archaeological digs show the importance of this juicy and sweet clam through their discovery in early cooking sites. When other food sources were scarce, the clams were always in abundance and over time they have earned a special status within Maoridom as a “Taonga” or treasured species. It is known that clams were preserved through drying for use when travelling away from coastal areas.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Given the cultural, recreational and commercial importance of the food source, a number of regulations and management practices exist so that clams are not over-fished and the environment is respected. For example, ensuring the harvest is less than the net productivity of the stock is fundamental. This means that total removals of biomass through natural and fishing mortality are less than additions through recruitment and growth. Regular monitoring of the biomass and health of clam beds occurs to ascertain the sustainability.

Years of research combined with traditional Ngai Tahu knowledge have also contributed to an in-depth understanding of what practices protect and enhance the clam stocks. It is known that clam growth accelerates after a bed is thinned and when combined with rotational harvesting, greater long term yields are evident.

The clam beds are further protected by two other key management strategies:

- The size at first harvest is currently 30mm, while clams first spawn at approximately 18mm, so a large proportion of the breeding stock remains after harvesting
- Significant areas currently set aside for recreational and customary fishing are only lightly harvested, so their biomass (and egg production) remain high.

Implications

- *An appropriate minimum harvest size ensures rapid recovery after fishing*
- *Intensive harvesting of clams larger than the minimum size encourages improved yield from the resource.*
- *Disturbance on the environment is minimal through rotational harvesting.*

SHELLFISH QUALITY

Selective harvesting provides clams with high meat yields and consistent shape. Again the pristine environment where the clams are located means that a high quality product is available. Water quality testing ensures that the clams are harvested from areas that meet or exceed health regulatory requirements. Harvesting and packing operations meet USFDA, HACCP and EU standards.

HARVESTING

This involves hand raking and ensures that only the best clams are selected. Rotational harvesting using GPS tools allows beds to recover rapidly after harvest. This type of harvesting results minimizes the impact on the environment.

PRODUCT FORM

Available in:

- Live chilled in shell. This offers a 12 day shelf life from harvest if kept in moist chilled conditions at around 36 – 39 degrees Fahrenheit (2 – 4 degrees centigrade). They should not be held in fresh water, placed in contact with ice or kept in drafts. Do not chill clams below 35 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees centigrade) as this will kill them.
- Frozen, vacuum packed, whole in shell
- Frozen Meat/Juice

All products are available in a range of retail, food service or bulk packs.

Flesh to shell ratio: 28% flesh, 72% shell

Size range: 7- 34 pieces per pound (12 – 65 pieces per kilogram)

Count Per Size:

Pasta	23 – 30/lb	50 – 65/kg
Small	17 – 22/lb	37 – 49/kg
Medium	12 – 16/lb	25 – 36/kg
Large	up to 11/lb	up to 25/kg

Availability: All year round

NUTRITION ANALYSIS (Per 100g) – “CALORIE BUSTERS”

<i>Nutrient</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>% Daily Value*</i>
Calories	43	
Protein	8.2 g	13%
Total Fat	0.9 g	1%
Saturated Fat	0.2 g	1%
Cholesterol	30 mg	10%
Sodium	700 mg	29%
Carbohydrate	0.6 g	< 1%
Dietary Fiber	0	0%
Sugars	0	0%
Vitamin A	90µg	9%
Calcium	48 mg	6%
Vitamin C	0	0%
Iron	4.8 mg	48%
Zinc	0.7 mg	5%
Potassium	148 mg	4%

(Source: New Zealand Institute for Crop & Research, 1994. * Based on a 2,000 calorie diet)

COOKING METHODS

New Zealand Littleneck Clams are suited to a wide variety of cooking methods and international cuisine. Frozen New Zealand clams are suitable for all preparation methods, raw or cooked. A golden rule is to remember that they are delicate and like “al dente” pasta, clams do not like overcooking.

Thawing: It is best to thaw clams overnight in the refrigerator to keep chilled. If this is not possible allow up to two hours at room temperature. Always keep thawed clams covered and chilled until used and use as soon as possible. Shells will open slightly on thawing.

Baking: Clams can be baked in liquid or sauce (such as white wine, tomato or herb sauce). The objective in preparing a baked clam dish is merely to warm the clams while heating the sauce or garnish.

Frying: Clam meat is ideal in burgers, patties or fritters.

Microwave: Arrange in a single layer in a circle on a plate. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and remove as soon as the clams open. This does not take long and two minutes may be all that is required.

Poaching: Clams may be poached in a liquid such a stock or wine. Bring the liquid to simmering point and add the clams. Keep the liquid simmering until the clam meat just changes to a cream colour.

Soups: New Zealand clams are delicious in soup and chowders. Watch out for the Nature’s Bounty Brand of Soups to try our very own chef inspired recipes.

For more information on Ngai Tahu Seafood or other products – please visit:

WWW.NGAI TAHU-SEAFOOD.COM