

Creamy mussels

Fresh mussels are a delicious and inexpensive restaurant-quality meal to make at home. Honestly, this recipe is more of a method than a recipe, but it is so simple that I had to share it. Most people are afraid of cooking live mussels as they are just not sure on how to prepare and serve them. New Zealand have beautiful green lipped mussels, fat and juicy and oh so delicious but any fresh mussels will do.

Carbohydrates: Total 9.3g's Net 5.8g's Protein
22.4g's Fat 46.5g's

You will need:

- 8 mussels per person
- ½ cup of cream per person
- Salt and pepper
- Fresh parsley and thyme



Buying mussels:

Choose fresh mussels: Look for mussels that are tightly closed or slightly open. Avoid mussels with broken shells or ones that are open and do not close when tapped. Fresh mussels should have a pleasant, briny smell like the sea.

Cleaning Mussels:

Before cooking, rinse the mussels under cold running water to remove any dirt or debris on the shells.

Mussels have small, thread-like strands called beards that attach them to surfaces. To remove the beards, hold the mussel firmly and tug the beard in the direction opposite to the hinge of the shell. I prefer to steam the mussels first and then remove the beards as it is so much easier.

Discard any mussels with cracked or broken shells, as well as those that remain open after rinsing.

Steaming Mussels:

I prefer a heavy based pan with a domed lid rather than a pot but both will work. Many recipes say to season the cooking liquid but I don't add flavour at this point. Add a cup of water to the pan and bring to the boil, then cover the base with the mussels and don't overcrowd it. It's better to do a few batches than filling the pan. You just want the mussels lightly steamed and not cooked to rubber.

Cover the pan with a lid and let the mussels steam for about 5-7 minutes, or until the shells have opened. Shake the pan gently a couple of times during cooking to help distribute the heat and ensure even cooking.

Discard any unopened mussels as they may be dead and shouldn't be eaten.

I like to start checking the mussels after about 3 minutes, removing those that have opened from the heat with tongs at 1-minute intervals. Use a slotted spoon or tongs to transfer the cooked mussels to

a bowl. Gently remove them from their shells and clean off the beard and if you are fussy like me, I prefer to remove the “foot” as well as the beard and the section where it attaches itself to the shell. I discard the shells but reserve some of the cooking liquid. Pour the cooking liquid through a fine mesh strainer to remove any impurities and reserve it for the creamy sauce.

3. Now for the creamy sauce:

Once all the mussels have been steamed and cleaned, give the pan a quick rinse to clean out any impurities and add back about half a cup of the cooking liquid per person. Let the cooking liquid reduce by about half and then add a half a cup of cream per person, to the pan. Depending on how many mussels you have cleaned (I buy about 8 per person) multiply this by the number of people you are serving.

Add a sprig or two of fresh parsley and thyme. Allow the cream and cooking liquid mixture to boil until the cream becomes thick and rich. Season this with salt and pepper to taste. Add the mussel meat back into the pan to just heat through. Immediately transfer the mussels with their sauce to serving dishes, garnishing with some fresh parsley.