

How to Shake a Crab

SEAFOOD FEATURED: DUNGENESS CRAB

Chef John Nelson, Meridian

Where I'm from, it is all about shaking a crab, using no utensils, only your hands, to extract the succulent meat. Let me teach you how so you can eat twice as much as your friends!

One of my passions is to pass on the art of cooking "Northwest" through television and cooking classes. My favorite lesson has to be showing someone how to "shake" a Dungeness crab. And my favorite comment at the end of the shaking crab class is, "You mean after all these years of struggling to get meat out, it's this easy and I could have been eating so much more? Let's be honest: it's no fun picking and picking at the inside of a crab leg and coming out with little shreds of meat. You want chunks—whole, rich, sweet, pieces of crab to dip into your butter or put on top of your Louie salad. So, grab a cab, lay out the newspaper or hang out by the sink and let's get to it.

INGREDIENTS	INSTRUCTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 whole cooked Dungeness crab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– With the abdomen up and the back of the crab toward you, pull down the very back of the shell with your thumb. We do this upside down so all the goodies don't fall from the inside of the shell, like the butter and nectar which can be used in another recipe if you want.– Now that you have removed the shell, flip the crab upright and feel at the front of the crab just behind the mouth for a hole to put your thumb in. With your thumb, pull down and remove the mouth of the crab. Right now, stop! If you find a red meaty blanket covering the interior of the body, this is the new shell growing and a real delicacy. Dip it in butter and enjoy it, or sauté with butter and garlic and a little white wine. Also take a look for the creamy butterscotch looking butter of the crab to save for other recipes or just spread it on a cracker. Oregon Sea Grant note: The 'crab butter' can have higher levels of naturally occurring biotoxins than the meat of the crab, so many food safety experts recommend discarding it.– At this point remove the gills on each side of the crab's body. Grasp both sides of the crab, holding both the legs and the body and snap the crab in half, removing the carrot-shaped abdomen from the bottom of the crab. The body meat is now exposed and ready to be washed

RESTAURANT: MERIDIAN (PACIFIC CITY, OR) | CHEF: JOHN NELSON | #EatOregonSeafood

WEBSITE: www.eatoregonseafood.org

gently with cold water. There you have it; you should have two clean halves of crab now ready to shake.

- If I were to tell you one more thing and walk away, it would be not to rip the legs from the body. Resist the urge and you will be a much happier person. If you take a look at the bottom half of the crab, you will see that each leg is sectioned with the body meat; in other words, the body is attached to the leg in a section just waiting for you to snap off in one piece.
- While looking at the bottom of the crab, grab two legs with your fingers as close as you can to the body, placing your thumb on the body and begin pulling up the with the outermost hand. You will notice the body begin to separate right at the line that denotes each section of the crab. If all goes well, you should be holding on to the leg like a handle, with the body section firmly attached. Do this for each leg. Once you are finished with that you are now ready for the “meat” of the matter.
- Grab a bowl and shake! Holding the leg with the body up, you will notice at the base of the body a pointy tooth-like piece sticking out. If it is there, grab it like a tab and peel around the body section. At this point you will see the body meat beginning to fall out! Hold on to the leg like a handle, shake the body meat out by tapping the top half of the crab leg on the edge of the bowl, and just watch the body meat fall out– awesome!
- Now that there is no meat in the body section, go ahead and rip it off from the leg. Notice that the leg is also sectioned and at the end of each section is a feather, or tendon that runs through the center of the meat. The meat is attached to this tendon, so it is important to remove this by snapping and pulling each section apart from the rest, also removing the tendon. With the tendon removed, you can now extract the meat from the large section of the leg. The

trick is to snap the top quarter of the shell with your thumb and pointer finger, left then right and snap– the top pops off. Bring your bowl over and bang the crab leg on the side of it, and whoosh– out comes the crab meat, a whole fancy leg.