

LLI PROUDLY PRESENTS: SHELLFISH

Understanding how to buy shellfish:

Lobsters and Crabs: if you are buying live, choose an active specimen that feels heavy for its size. If buying cooked, check that the shell is undamaged and the claws intact. The smell should be fresh and not strong.

Mussels and Clams: Avoid those that are excessively covered in mud or barnacles, or that appear to be cracked or damaged. Discard any that remain open once tapped.

Scallops: These are most often sold opened, cleaned and trimmed rather than in their closed shells. Check that they smell sweet, if so, they are fresh. The flesh of scallops is slightly grey and translucent, not perfectly white. Avoid scallops soaking in any liquid.

Oysters: The shells must be undamaged and tightly closed. When tapped, they should sound “solid”. Traditionally, oysters were picked (harvested) when there was an “r” in the month to avoid infection during the warmer months. They are now generally sold all year round because of modern techniques of oyster farming and improved methods of transporting them to market.

Shrimp: These are sold in several ways, cooked in or out of their shells, or raw in their shells. Cooked shrimp should be pink and firm, not watery. Raw shrimp should also be firm, with shiny gray shells. Avoid shrimp with black spots, a sign of aging. Shrimp are sold by the number of shrimp per pound, for example, shrimp marked 20-25 means there are 20 to 25 shrimp per pound. Remember, the lower the number of shrimp per pound, the larger the size of the shrimp.

NOTE: Some mollusks require special attention. A live shellfish yields the best flavor, so store mussels and clams in salted water (4 TBSP. salt to 1 quart of water) not fresh water which will kill them. Bearding mussels more than a few

hours prior to cooking can spoil them. Clams and/or mussels with cracked or damaged shells should be thrown out. Once cooked any mussels or clams that did not open should be thrown out.