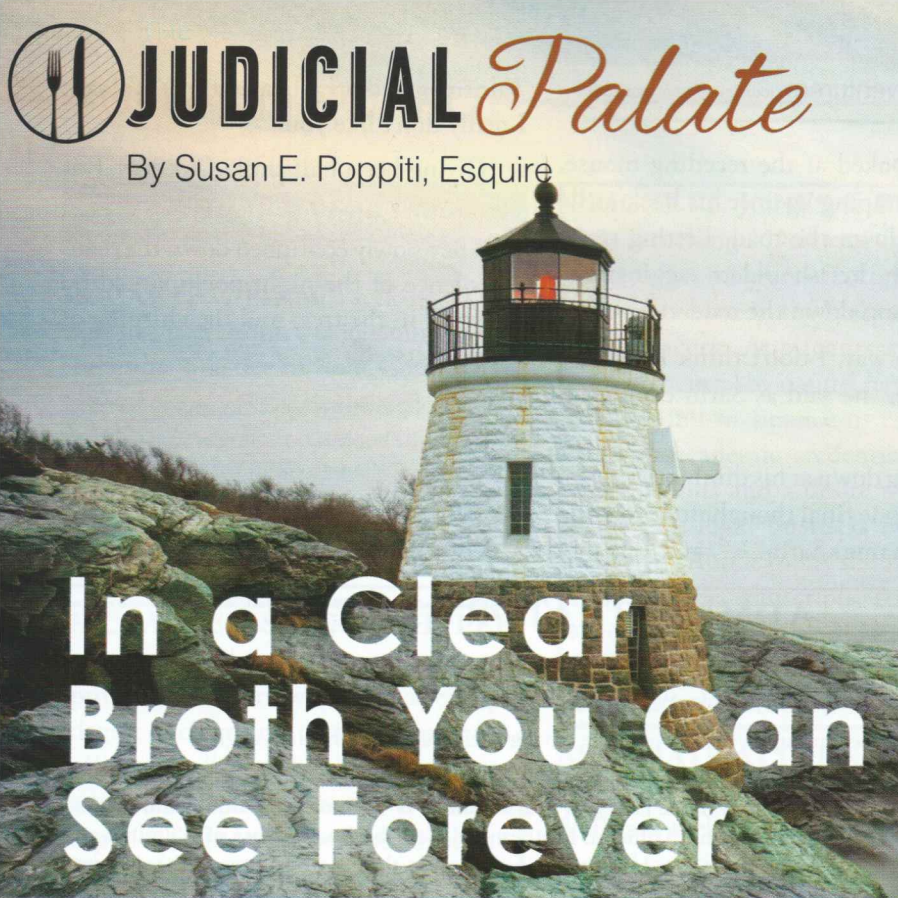


By Susan E. Poppiti, Esquire




In a Clear Broth You Can See Forever

As the temperature rises, many of you are heading to the Delaware beach or the Jersey shore – toward the fresh ocean air. This month's column pays tribute to the ocean by showcasing a recipe from Rhode Island, the Ocean State.

Prior to a recent visit to Providence, my knowledge of clam chowder was limited to two varieties: New England and Manhattan. I had never enjoyed the clear broth version. A lunch at famed seafood restaurant Hemenway's along the Providence River introduced me to New England clam chowder's sister soup – Rhode Island clam chowder – sans heavy cream.

Once you decide to go the RI route, you must settle on the type of clam. You could opt for quahogs or "chowder clams," the largest of the hard-shells with a four inch or more diameter. Or, you could seek out cherrystones, one step down in size but not in flavor. In either case, the clams would require chopping. My chowder clam of choice is the bite-size littleneck, which goes in whole.

This recipe will serve as dinner for two with leftovers or as a soup course for four. The key, as in many dishes, is the bacon! 

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Rhode Island Clam Chowder

Ingredients

- 3 Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into ½ inch cubes (Why bother peeling?)
- 4 thick slices smoked slab bacon, cut into ¼ inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 1 small Vidalia onion, cut into ¼ inch cubes
- 3 8 ounce bottles clam juice (Try Bar Harbor brand for deep flavor.)
- 1 8 ounce bottle lobster juice (Again, go with Bar Harbor's Maine Lobster Juice.)
- ½ cup Rosé wine from Provence
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pint littleneck clams, shucked
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground black pepper

Instructions

Boil the potatoes until tender and set aside. In a large pot, sauté the bacon in the olive oil over medium-low heat. Stir occasionally, and cook until the bacon is browned around the edges, about 10 minutes.

Leave the bacon in the pot, and add the butter and onion. Stir occasionally, and cook until the onion is softened, about 6 minutes. Add the clam broth, lobster broth, wine, potatoes and bay leaf.

Stir, turn the heat up to medium and bring to a boil. Then, reduce the heat and simmer while you make an arugula salad or enjoy some radishes with butter (Just a few suggestions!)

When ready to dine, add the clams and chives. The clams will take just a few minutes to cook. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and discard the bay leaf before serving.

Consider adding some crushed red pepper or Piment d'Espelette for heat. Some thinly sliced jalapeño also makes for a bright addition. And, don't forget small, salted oyster crackers or a few slices of crunchy baguette.

Then, sit back and breathe in the ocean air.