

Selecting Crawfish for Cooking

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When selecting crawfish for cooking, use only live ones. They should be free from mud, dirt, debris and other foreign matter. If purchased alive from most Texas producers, this is not a problem as they are sorted and washed before the sale. If debris or dead crawfish are in the container, remove them. If dirt or mud is present, wash the crawfish in a number 3 tub or other suitable container. Purging of farm-raised Texas crawfish usually is not necessary, because they are kept in live tanks for 24 to 48 hours before they are sold.

BOILING CRAWFISH FOR HOME USE

Boiling is the most popular method for cooking crawfish in Texas. The following procedure gives excellent results:

Choose a pot large enough to hold the crawfish and the water. Use about 1 gallon of water for every 2 pounds of crawfish. Crawfish usually are sold in 40-pound sacks. To boil a whole sack at one time requires a 32- to 35-gallon pot. Do not use too small a pot. If the pot is too full, the water and foam from boiling will overflow. It is better to cook smaller batches than risk overflows.

Put the water into the pot and add seasoning. Add 1 pound of salt for every 5 gallons of water. Add either liquid or dry crab boil according to label recommendations or to individual taste. Often onions, lemon wedges, garlic, red pepper, potatoes, sweet corn and other vegetables are added also.

Bring the seasoned water to a rolling boil. Carefully add the crawfish. Crawfish are killed quickly upon contact with the boiling water. Bring the water back to a boil and make sure all crawfish are

submerged. Continue boiling for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the crawfish soak for another 10 minutes before removing. This enhances the flavor.

Remove the crawfish from the water and allow them to air cool. As soon as they are cool enough to handle, they can be peeled and eaten. On the average, plan for 4 pounds of crawfish per person.

NUTRITIVE VALUE OF CRAWFISH

Crawfish are a rich source of protein and other essential nutrients. They are low in fat (0.8 percent) with only 85 calories in a 3½-ounce serving of boiled tails. This makes them excellent diet food for the weight conscious.

Crawfish are delicious either boiled or mixed with an extender. Crawfish salad, crawfish bisque and crawfish étouffé are only a few of the culinary delights. They may be substituted for shrimp in many recipes but also have a long history of recipes developed specifically for them.

Nutrient content of crawfish in a 3½-ounce serving

Protein	19.4 grams
Fat	0.8 grams
Carbohydrates	0
Calories	85
Cholesterol	277 milligrams

Acknowledgments

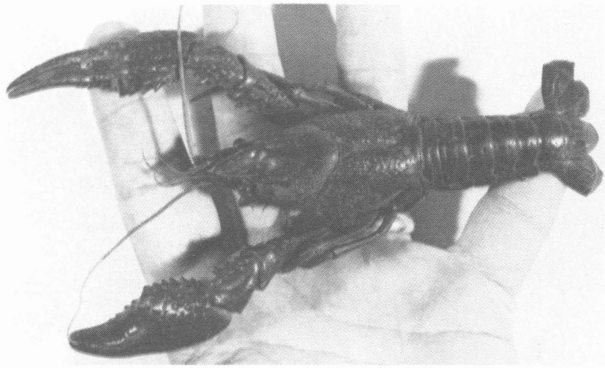
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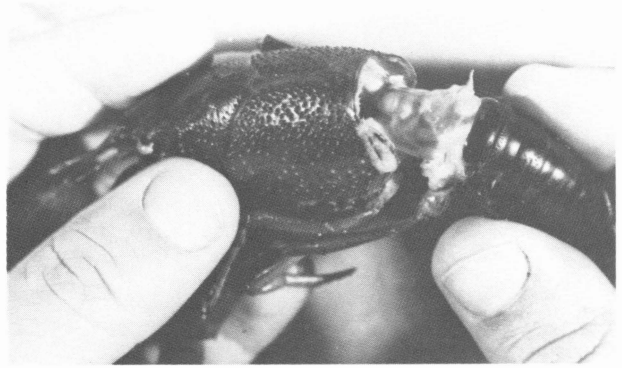
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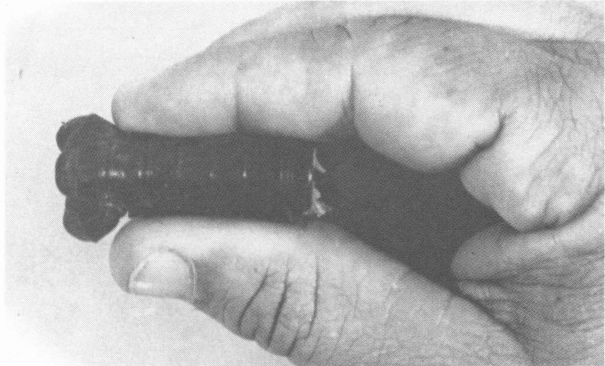




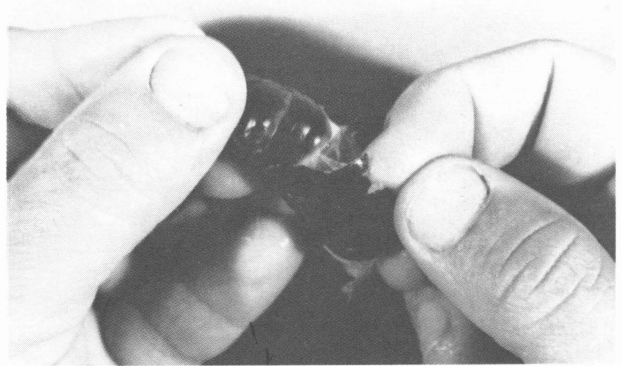
Cooking begins with live crawfish; as they cook, they become bright red.



Grasp the first three shell segments on the side and loosen by lifting and pulling around the meat.



Separate the tail from the head by slightly twisting and firmly pulling the tail from the head. Then discard the head.



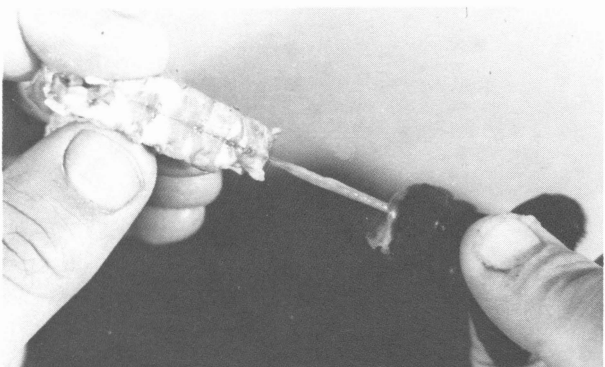
Remove this piece and discard.



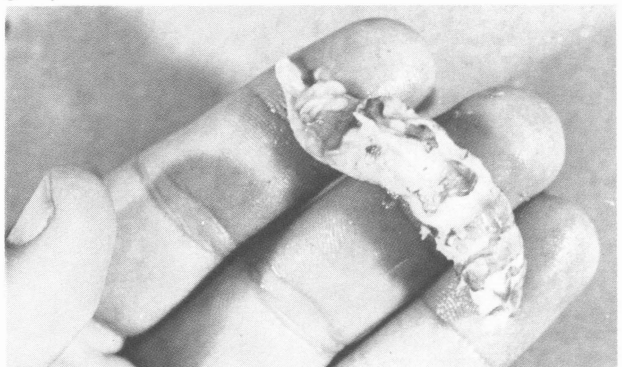
Holding the tail between the forefinger and thumb, squeeze. Generally, you can hear the shell crack.



Firmly grasp the last segment and tail fin between the thumb and forefinger of one hand and the meat with the other hand. Pull gently.



The meat should slide out of the shell and the vein will pull free from the meat.



The meat is now ready for eating, freezing or adding to your favorite crawfish dish.

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