

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Buzzards Bay Project • 508.291.3625 • www.buzzardsbay.org • March 2001

BUZZARDS BAY

Buzzards Bay covers 1,939 square kilometers and sits on the southern coast of Massachusetts, just under the arm of Cape Cod. The bay is a diverse habitat of salt marshes, sandy beaches, eelgrass beds, small embayments, tidal streams and urban ports. Bay waters are used for shellfishing, swimming, boating, and marine transportation. Taken as a whole the area is considered relatively healthy, but the waters of the smaller embayments are threatened by increasing amounts of contamination. Pollution associated with residential development, industrial waste, and sewage contamination, as indicated by fecal coliform bacteria and elevated nitrogen levels, contributes to declining water quality.

FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- More than 236,000 people live in the watershed.
- Nearly 20,000 marine vessels pass through Buzzards Bay annually.
- More than 10,000 vessels anchor in Buzzards Bay each summer.
- Cranberry farms in the watershed produce more than 20 percent of the world's cranberry harvest.
- Buzzards Bay is home to the world-renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.
- The combined quahog, bay scallop, soft-shell clam and oyster harvest was valued at more than \$6 million in 1994.

HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Excessive nutrient loadings are occurring because of polluted groundwater and stormwater runoff.
- Bacterial contamination resulting from improper sewage disposal and stormwater runoff remains problematic.
- The closure of shellfish beds and bathing beaches has significant negative impacts on the local economy.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- The number of acres of shellfish beds closed due to bacterial contamination has declined nearly 25 percent since the Management Plan was completed in 1991.
- The program assisted in the construction of a test center to promote advanced septic treatment solutions and established limits on the amounts of nitrogen that can enter the embayments.
- The designation of Buzzards Bay as a no-discharge area should significantly reduce bacteria and nutrient inputs to the bay from boats.
- The program developed an atlas of 172 tidally restricted salt marshes that will be tremendously helpful in efforts to remove tidal restrictions and improve and restore wetland health.

Stuffed Quahogs

(hard-shell clams)

12 Cherrystones
(medium sized quahogs)
1 8-oz bag prepared stuffing
or make your own
3 celery stalks,
finely chopped
1/2 medium onion,
chopped
1/2 stick butter
2 tsp red pepper flakes
(or to taste)

Prepare stuffing according to directions on package or your favorite way. Sauté onion, red pepper flakes and celery in butter and add to stuffing.

Scrub quahogs clean. Add to a pot with 1/2 cup water. Steam quahogs until they pop open. Open shells to remove meat being careful not to break the joint. Chop or grind all meat coarsely and add to stuffing mix. Mix well. Stuff each shell with stuffing and close. Refrigerate over night.

To reheat, place on cookie sheet and bake in a 350 degree oven for approximately 15 minutes or microwave on high 1-2 minutes. Open top shell and place 1 tablespoon butter in top shell. Place back in oven until butter melts or microwave for 15 seconds.

To eat: dip forkful of stuffing in butter and enjoy!

Variations: You may add any additional seafood you like such as shrimp, fish or scallops. The traditional New England recipe calls for spicy sausage to be added to the stuffing mix!