

## **New England Style Clam Chowder**

4 cans (6.5 oz.) minced clams, drained, juice reserved  
2 bottles clam juice  
6 slice bacon, chopped  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 large sweet onion, diced  
6 large potatoes, peeled and diced  
2 cups cream or half and half  
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, plus extra for garnish if desired (1 teaspoon dried thyme may be substituted)  
2 bay leaves  
1 teaspoon salt or more to taste  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon white pepper

In a large Dutch oven or other heavy bottomed pot, cook diced bacon over medium high until bacon is cooked but not crispy. Add butter, celery, onion, bay leaves, thyme and salt and pepper. Turn the heat down to medium, continue to cook until the onion and celery are tender (about 8 to 10 minutes).

Add diced potatoes, reserved clam juice and bottled clam juice. If needed, add enough water to just cover the potatoes. Bring to a boil then turn down and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about another 10 minutes. Spoon off any 'scum' that boils up. When potatoes are tender stir in cream and clams, gently heat until warmed through about 5 minutes. Taste, add more salt and pepper if necessary. Remove bay leaves before serving. Top chowder with a pat of butter and some fresh thyme or chopped parsley if desired.