

Dining Out

Eating Shellfish with Ease

Eating shellfish that's served in the shell can be a little tricky for anyone. Here are a few tips that can help you enjoy these dishes with confidence.

- It's fine to use your hands when eating shellfish. This is true at home or in a restaurant.
- The host or wait staff usually provides an extra dish or bowl where you can put the empty shells. Locate the dish before you begin eating, so you can reach for it easily.
- For some shellfish, like oysters, mussels, and clams, the shells open during the cooking process.
 - To remove the meat, hold the shell with one hand, and hold your fork with the other hand. Then use the fork to scoop up the meat, or to spear the meat and twist it.

Tip: If you like, you can use another shell instead of a fork. Use the shell like a scoop, or like a pair of tweezers, to remove the meat and bring it to your mouth.

- For other shellfish, like crab, lobster, and shrimp, you often break the shells yourself, at the table.

Tip: You can use your hands to separate the different parts of a crab or lobster, and use a tool that's like a nutcracker to crack open the hardest shells. Then use a fork or your fingers to remove the meat.

- Some restaurants offer cracked crab or lobster, which means part of the work is already done. But you'll still use your hands and/or a fork to remove the meat.
- Don't be shy about wearing a bib. It's a tradition at many restaurants that serve crab or lobster, and there's nothing fancier than keeping your clothes clean.