

Feeling Kind of Crabby

Written by Debbi Covington

Monday, 04 April 2016 11:50 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 April 2016 05:08



It's no secret that I'm an Eastern North Carolina girl. I was raised eating vinegar and pepper pork barbecue, fried cornsticks and chicken dumplings. But, I was also lucky to live close enough to the coast to make frequent road trips to Morehead, the Outer Banks and Beaufort – pronounced “Bow-fert.”

(I never knew there was a Beaufort – pronounced “Bew-fert” – until I met my husband, Vince.) I even lived in Wilmington for a few months. As a matter of fact, Wilmington is where I began to really love seafood. Until I was in my 20's, most everything that we consumed from the ocean was fried and covered in cocktail sauce or ketchup, mainly fried flounder and fried shrimp. In Wilmington, I discovered steamed clams, roasted grouper, shrimp toast and the yummiest Hot Crab Dip from Elijah's restaurant. Come to think of it, I gained a good little bit of weight back in my Wilmington days. I totally blame it on that crab dip. Anyway, I have loved crab ever since. The recipes this week all feature lump crab meat. I used back fin (also called special) crab meat for the Outer Banks Crab Pies and the Cheesy Crab Bread. I typically prefer claw crab meat for the Crab Meat Imperial. The trick is to fold in the crab meat very gently to keep it from breaking up too much. P.S. My copycat version of Elijah's Hot Crab Dip is on my catering menu. If you ever need to plan a party, I highly recommend it.

Outer Banks Crab Pie

2 (9-inch) frozen deep dish pie crusts, thawed in refrigerator

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1 egg white, beaten

4 eggs

2 tablespoons flour

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup whole milk

1 (5-ounce) package shredded swiss cheese

1 (8-ounce) package shredded sharp cheddar cheese

2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning

1 tablespoon finely chopped onion

1 tablespoon finely chopped green pepper

1 pound lump crab meat

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Additional Old Bay seasoning, to garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Par bake pie crusts. (Place pie crusts on a baking sheet, prick crusts with tines of a fork, brush with beaten egg white and bake for 15 minutes or until crusts are beginning to brown lightly.) In a large bowl, combine eggs, flour, mayonnaise and milk. Mix well to combine. Stir in cheeses, Old Bay, onion and green pepper. Gently fold in crab meat. Pour mixture into prepared pie crusts. Sprinkle with additional Old Bay seasoning. Bake in 350 degree oven for 40 to 50 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center of the pies comes out clean. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing. Serves 10 to 12.

Cheesy Crab Bread



1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1 cup mozzarella cheese

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¼ cup chopped green onion

2 tablespoon pimentos, drained

1 tablespoon Italian parsley, chopped

1 pound lump crab meat

Dash Old Bay seasoning

1 loaf French bread, sliced

Mix mayonnaise with cheeses, green onion, Old Bay seasoning pimentos and parsley. Fold in crab meat. Mound crab mixture on top of bread slices. Broil until hot and bubbly. Serves 10.



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Crab Meat Imperial

¼ cup green pepper, chopped

¼ cup celery, chopped

2 tablespoons yellow onion, chopped

1 (2-ounce) jar diced pimento, drained

2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 tablespoon fresh Italian parsley, chopped

1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning (crab boil)

½ teaspoon Dijon mustard

Dash hot sauce

Dash hot pepper

1 egg

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3 tablespoons real mayonnaise

1 pound fresh lump crabmeat

Saute green pepper, celery, onion, and pimento in melted butter in large skillet until tender. Stir in parsley, Old Bay seasoning, Dijon mustard, hot sauce, and red pepper. Combine egg and mayonnaise; stir in seasoned celery mixture. Gently stir in fresh lump crab meat. Spoon into four lightly greased baking shells. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes. Garnish with fresh parsley. Serves 4.



The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of two cookbooks, Gold Medal Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award, Celebrate Everything! and Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at dbc@cateringbydebbicovington.com.