

Processing Crab

There are a number of different ways to process crab and the most important first step is to decide how to kill them and whether to clean them before or after boiling in hot water.

Crabs can be placed directly into boiling water and will immediately die

They can be placed in fresh water for 20-30 minutes which causes them to drown or

They can be stunned by placing them in ice water and then place into boiling water.

Also they can be killed by sticking an ice pick into the crab on the underside just behind the mouth or They can be killed with a blow to the abdomen.

Placing the crab directly into boiling water can cause them to shed their legs and retain water in the shell. This is hard on the crab and may also result in tough meat.

Once the crab has been killed it can be placed into boiling water and then cleaned or it can be cleaned before boiling. To clean the crab before or after boiling, pry off the back, break the crab in two, remove the viscera, and pull off the gill filaments.

There are various ways to cook crab and any of the following ways can be used:

Boil the crab in a salt water solution made by adding 1/4 cup salt per gallon of fresh water. Bring the water to a boil and then add the crabs and boil the water for about 20 minutes. If the crabs are cleaned before boiling the time can be reduced to about 12 minutes. Seafood seasoning can also be added during cooking to give the crab meat a nice flavor.

A second method for cooking the crab is to steam them. This can be done by placing them on a rack above the water and periodically turning them. Cooking time is about 20 minutes. Salt and seasoning can be added.

After the crabs are cooked, take them from the pot and wash them off with cold water. Remove the meat from the legs and body cavity. The meat can be eaten immediately or used in various crab recipes. The freshly cooked crab meat can be kept in a refrigerator for 1-2 days. If the crab meat is to be frozen for later use, do not remove the meat from the legs or body.

If you catch the crabs in a coastal area where there are marinas and commercial fish processing facilities there may be a commercial crab cooking pot that can be used for a small fee. An easier way to get good crab meat without going through all of the above steps is to go to a good seafood market and buy crabs that are already boiled. Also most markets will clean the crab for you but you will need to remove the meat from the legs and body.