

# 65 Best Summer Events

The Easiest Clambake  
You'll Ever Make (p. 62)

Ice Cream Love at  
Kimball Farm (p. 70)

A White Mountains  
Town to Call Home (p. 102)

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NEW ENGLAND'S MAGAZINE FOR 80 YEARS

## Your Very Own Sandcastle

Places to stay on the beach,  
from camping and classic cottages  
to resorts (p. 34)

The  
Elusive  
Promise of  
the Maine  
Tides  
(p. 90)



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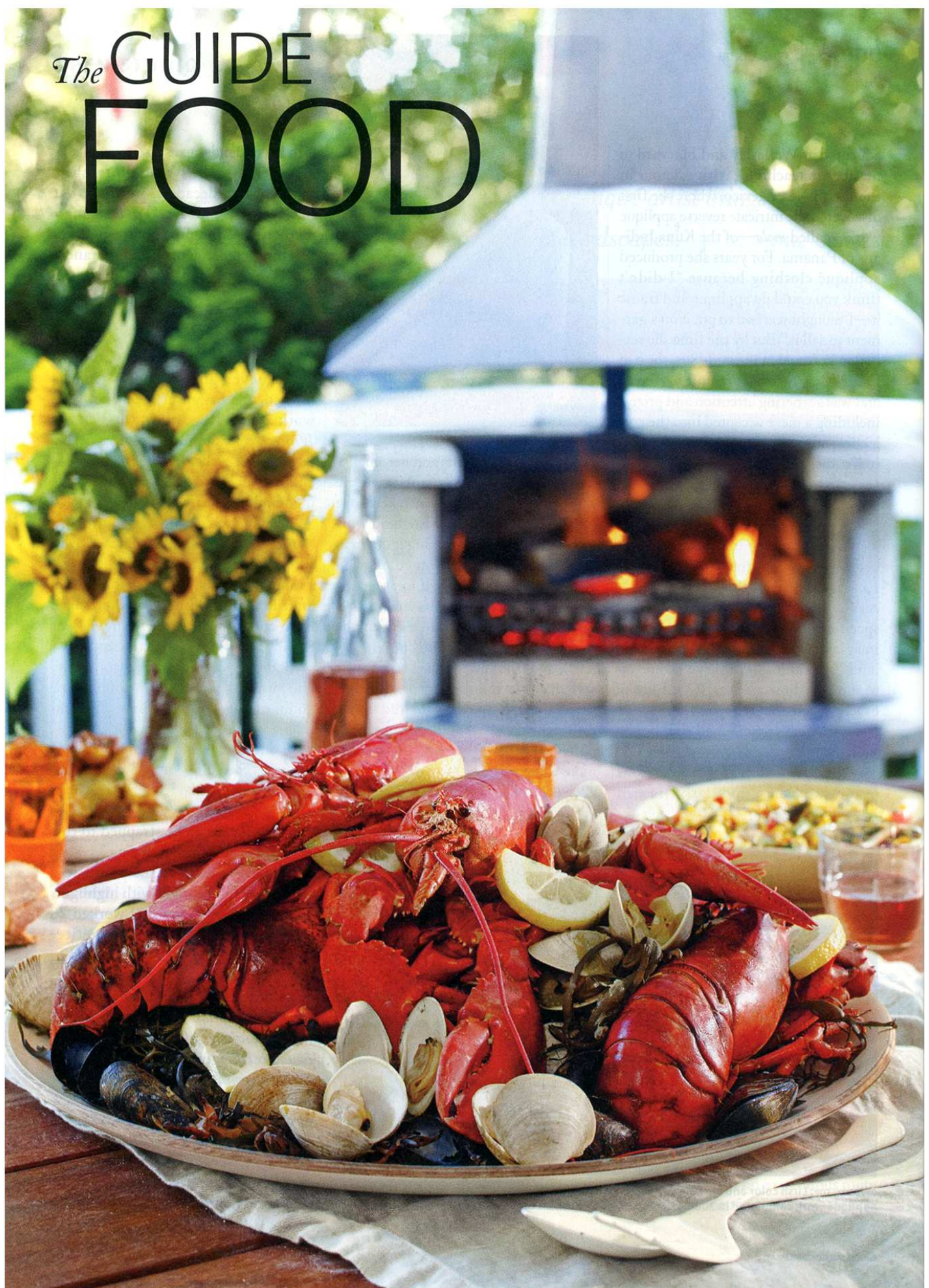


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A Day This Small Town  
Will Never Forget (p. 96)



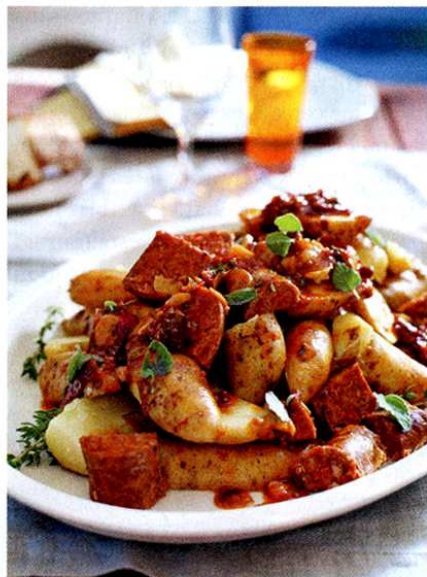
# The GUIDE FOOD





INSPIRED BY THE COOKING AT ONE OF CAPE COD'S BEST RESTAURANTS, WE ASKED FOR A FRESH TAKE ON SOME CLASSIC NEW ENGLAND RECIPES. WE GOT THAT—PLUS A LOOK INTO A MOST UNLIKELY, AND FRUITFUL, PARTNERSHIP.

BY AMY TRAVERSO



# *a New Yankee* Clambake

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
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RECIPES BY  
**MATT TROPEANO**

STYLING BY  
**CATRINE KELTY**

**T**his is a story of two men who found an unlikely home on Cape Cod, and in doing so, changed the way their community eats. One of them is a native son, raised in Falmouth, Massachusetts, but lured away at a young age to New York, where he became a darling of the glittering Manhattan restaurant world. The other came from the edge of central Europe, seeking shelter from a war. Both have since put down roots in the Cape's sandy soil, raising their families here, and doing work that allows Cape Codders and wash-ashores to all eat like kings (or at least like city folk) and gives local farmers a new market for their goods. Having tasted some of that food for ourselves, we asked these two, Matt Tropeano and Vojin Vujosevic, to tackle a most authentic Cape Cod meal:

the clambake. Only, we wanted a clambake that anyone could make at home, on a stove, far from the salt air. They complied, with a menu so delicious that it stands as a Yankee classic.

The story of Pain D'Avignon, the business that Vojin (rhymes with "coin") started and where Matt is now executive chef, really began in the early 1990s, as the former Yugoslavia stood on the brink of war. Vojin was a young college student in Belgrade, an inveterate traveler who had already visited America many times as a tourist and exchange student. His parents suggested that it might be time to go back. "Nobody wanted to go to war," Vojin says. "It made no sense to anybody. My parents thought it was very wise that I come back to the U.S. and continue school and 'plan on not coming back for a while.' Those were the words of my father."



Vojin pauses to make himself a cup of espresso—his third or fourth of the day. He’s standing in the kitchen of the house he shares with his wife, Diana, and two young sons. It’s a modern Cape, airy and white, with a big deck that serves as an outdoor living room, dining room, and kitchen from May to October. From there, the view is of gardens and trees and the blue waters of Follins Pond. It’s a lovely spot, but getting here was an uphill climb.

Vojin landed in New York in 1991 and found a community of Serbian expats working at a French bakery owned by Eli Zabar of the eponymous Upper West Side food emporium. “We thought we’d do something similar in Massachusetts because there was no great bread there,” Vojin says. “And Boston was more European, more of a place that I would like to live and spend time in.” So he and three friends searched for a storefront on Beacon Hill. When that proved too expensive, they looked south. “Someone said, ‘Cape Cod is the place to be,’” Vojin recalls. “It’s beautiful, it’s big, it’s touristy. Open up a bakery there and then you can move to Boston.”

The group set up shop on Main Street in Hyannis, hired a baker, and spent the next few months learning his secrets. “Working 20 hours a day, you learn the trade pretty quickly,” Vojin says. “That’s all we did—bake bread. For the first year, I baked bread for nine months with no days off.” Soon they were selling to restaurants and shops on the Cape, then in Boston and New York. Eventually, the other partners sold their shares of the company and Vojin became the sole owner. By 2009, the bakery was housed in a 20,000-square-foot space on Hinckley Road, near Hyannis Airport, and Vojin decided to add a café/restaurant.

Meanwhile, Matt Tropeano had left Massachusetts to make his way in the

kitchens of Manhattan. “I knew that I wanted to work there and experience all the classic French restaurants I’d read about,” Matt says. “I worked one night at La Grenouille and thought, ‘This is it.’” Under La Grenouille’s legendary owner, Charles Masson, Matt rose from line cook to executive chef in eight years. He earned three stars from Sam Sifton in the *New York Times*. It was time for another challenge. His next project, a modern French restaurant in Hell’s Kitchen, was lauded for its food but was poorly located and awkwardly designed; it closed after a short time.



**ABOVE:** The bakery/café opened in 1992 in Hyannis; today it offers lunch and dinner menus as well. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:** From left, Diana Vujosevic, Andrea and Matt Tropeano, Vojin Vujosevic; the view from the deck of the Vujosevics’ home on Cape Cod.

Meanwhile, Matt and his wife, Andrea, were still coming to Falmouth every summer to see his parents and to let their kids run free on the beach. “In the back of our minds, we thought, ‘There’s an opportunity here,’” Matt says. He’d long known of Pain D’Avignon from his La Grenouille days—they served Vojin’s bread there—and when he heard that they were looking for a chef, all the pieces came together.

“Vojin and Diana are great,” Matt says. “They have similar backgrounds, similar attitudes toward life and love of travel.” It’s rare for all four friends to have time off during the busy summer season, let alone all at the same time, but on the day of our visit, we were lucky to

bring both families together. Matt prepared the lobster, salads, and steamed potatoes, and everyone feasted and recounted the twists and turns that had led them here, to this unexpected life. Vojin’s mother, visiting from Serbia, joined in the fun.

Since taking over the kitchen, Matt has expanded the restaurant’s local sourcing so that up to 75 percent of the produce comes from area farms in season. Cynthia Cole of Wanna Bee Farm in Barnstable credits Pain D’Avignon with keeping her operation in business. “We sit down in January and go through her seed catalogue and pick out what she’ll grow for us,” Matt says. Andrea laughs: “Matt’s become a farmer since we moved up here.”

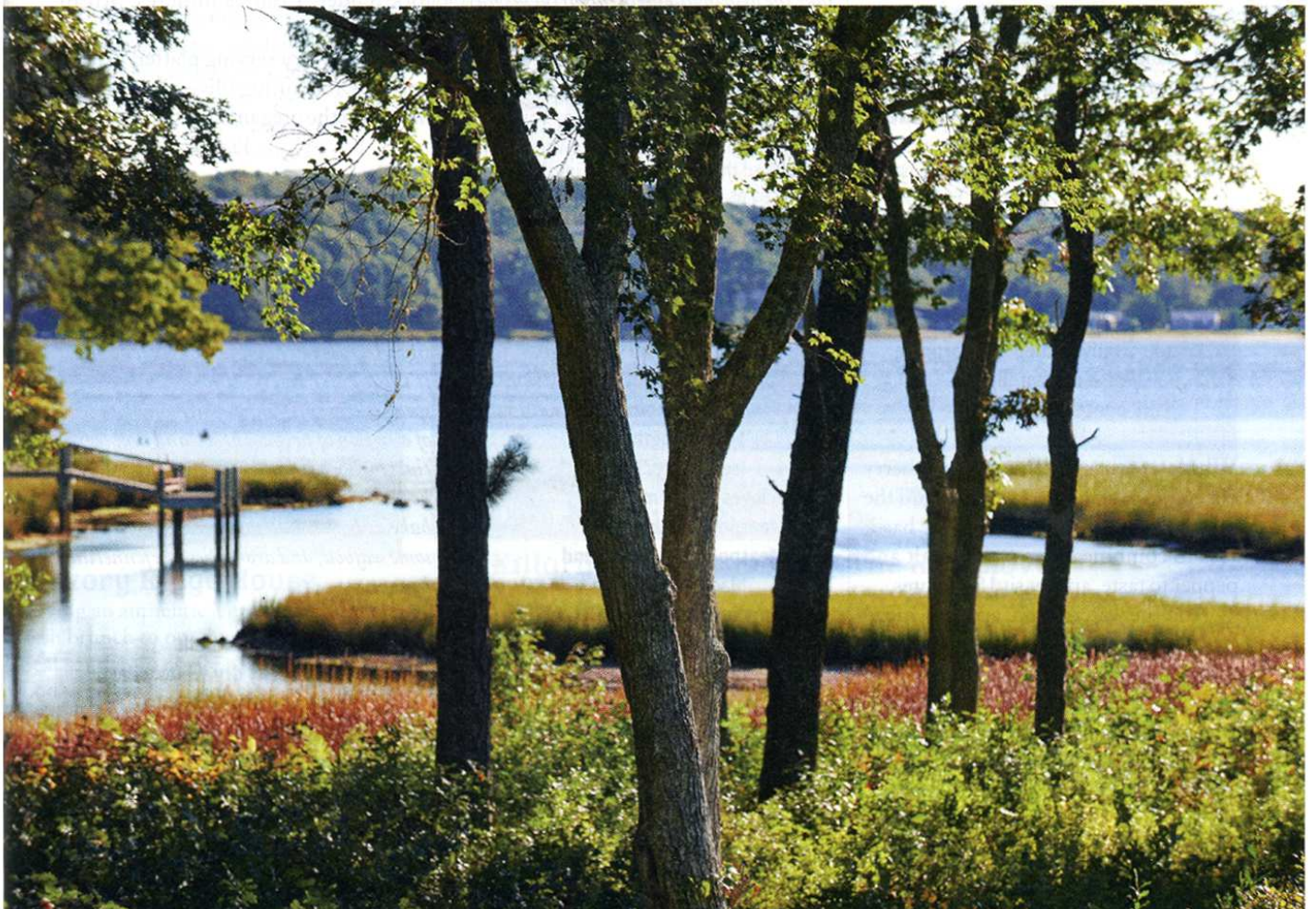
“My buddies in New York think, ‘Okay, now he’s a hermit,’” Matt says. “And in a way, I’m kinda doing that. On the Cape, people love good food and they haven’t had it, so we get to create our own standards. I think I’m cooking the best food I’ve ever cooked before. We’re not using tweezers and doing *amuse-bouches*, but we’re doing some complex flavors and simple, delicious food.”

That same philosophy applies to the recipes you’ll find here. Nothing frou-frou, but familiar ingredients combined in new ways: tomato and watermelon together in a salad, potatoes and spicy sausage steamed in white wine, and a “clambake” you can cook in a lobster pot. It’ll inspire you to revisit classic New England cooking with fresh eyes. As Matt says, “Sometimes you have to go away from things and then come back and see them differently.”

*Pain D’Avignon, 15 Hinckley Road, Hyannis, MA. 508-778-8588; [paindavignon.com](http://paindavignon.com). For photos of a traditional seaside feast: [YankeeMagazine.com/Clambake](http://YankeeMagazine.com/Clambake)*

*(recipes begin on p. 66)*









1



2



3

**STOVETOP CLAMBAKE STEP-BY-STEP:** It's all about easy layering. (1) Add the fennel, white wine, celery, lemons, garlic, leeks, and seasonings to 4 quarts of water. Bring to a boil; then add the lobsters, followed by the clams and seaweed. (2) After the lobsters and clams have cooked 6 minutes, add the mussels. (3) Six more minutes of cooking: The shellfish should open and the lobster's done.

## TOMATO SALAD WITH WATERMELON & MOZZARELLA

TOTAL TIME: 35 MINUTES;  
HANDS-ON TIME: 35 MINUTES

*Here's a salad that eats like a meal, a delicious, substantial celebration of summer flavors that requires just a handful of ingredients and minimal prep time, yet looks sophisticated enough to pass as restaurant fare.*

- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 3 cups red or multicolored cherry tomatoes, stemmed and halved
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1/4 cup firmly packed chopped fresh basil, divided
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups cubed seedless watermelon (1-inch cubes)
- 2 cups firmly packed baby arugula
- 2 balls fresh mozzarella (8 ounces each), sliced

Whisk together the olive oil and sherry vinegar in a medium-size bowl. Add the tomatoes, red onion, and half the basil; toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and let sit 15 minutes.

Add the watermelon, arugula, mozzarella, and remaining basil to the tomato mixture and toss gently just till combined. Check the seasoning and add more salt and pepper as needed. Divide the salad evenly among plates and serve immediately. *Yield: 6 servings*

## ANDOUILLE STEAMED POTATOES

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES;  
HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES

*Until Matt Tropeano shared this recipe, we'd never tried steaming potatoes with wine. This technique imparts so much flavor that it's now our favorite way to jazz up spuds. Spicy sausage and fresh herbs take the dish to intensely flavorful heights.*

**Note:** You may substitute fresh chorizo or linguica for the dry sausage by simply precooking the links in a skillet over medium heat. Once browned and cooked through, cut them into 1-inch pieces as directed below and proceed with the recipe as written.

- 1 tablespoon plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/4 pounds cured (dry) chorizo, linguica, or other spicy sausage, halved lengthwise and cut into 1-inch lengths (see "Note," above)
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium-size tomato, diced
- 3 pounds fingerling potatoes, unpeeled, halved lengthwise
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- Garnish: 1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat; then add the sausage and garlic and stir until the garlic is translucent and fragrant. Add the salt, pepper, and diced tomato, and cook, stirring, 2 minutes.

Add the potatoes and pour the wine over all. Stir; then bring the wine to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and steam the potatoes until they're fork-tender, 15 to 18 minutes. Stir in the thyme.

Transfer to a serving platter, drizzle with the remaining olive oil, and garnish with the oregano.

*Yield: 8 to 10 servings*

## STOVETOP CLAMBAKE

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES;  
HANDS-ON TIME: 40 MINUTES

*A traditional beachfront clam bake is a signature New England experience, but it's an effort reserved for only the most special occasions (unless you're in possession of a stretch of private beach and ample free time to dig a pit and build a fire). You can, however, reproduce the flavors of a clam bake at home—all you need is a large pot, some seafood, and aromatics like fennel and lemons.*

- 1 fennel bulb, with stalk
- 1 bottle (750ml) dry white wine, such as Pinot Grigio
- 4 celery stalks, cut into 1-inch lengths
- 2 lemons, halved lengthwise, then thinly sliced



- 1 head of garlic, cloves separated
- 2 leeks, white parts only, finely diced
- 1½ tablespoons kosher or sea salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 8 live lobsters,  
about 1¼ pounds each
- 4 pounds littleneck clams
- Fresh seaweed (optional)
- 2 pounds mussels, scrubbed  
and debearded
- 1 cup melted salted butter

Remove the stalk and fronds from the fennel bulb and chop roughly. Cut the bulb into ½-inch-thick rings. Put the chopped fennel and fennel rings into a lobster pot with 4 quarts of water. Add the wine, celery, lemons, garlic, leeks, salt, paprika, chili powder, and cayenne. Bring to a boil.

Add the lobsters and clams to the pot with the seaweed, if using. Cover

and cook 6 minutes. Add the mussels and continue cooking 6 more minutes. When all the shellfish is open, the lobsters will be done. Remove the seafood from the pot and serve hot with the cooking liquid and melted butter.

*Yield: 8 servings*

### CORN & TOMATO SALAD

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES;

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES

*Matt Tropeano takes this recipe firmly into summer with tomatoes, corn, and fresh herbs, putting the dish somewhere between a light stew and a hearty salad.*

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½ large red bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 4 cups fresh corn kernels,  
cut from 4 to 5 large ears
- 2 cups halved cherry tomatoes

- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- Kosher salt and freshly ground  
black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup reduced-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup lima beans, edamame, or  
shelled and cooked fava beans
- 2 cups chopped green beans  
(2-inch lengths)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- Garnish: basil flowers (optional)

Set a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil; then add the onion, bell pepper, and garlic, and cook, stirring, 3 minutes. Add the corn, tomatoes, and paprika. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook 3 more minutes.

Add the chicken stock and simmer 8 minutes. Add the lima beans (or edamame or fava beans); then add the green beans and all the herbs. Check the seasoning and add more salt or pepper to taste. Cook 3 minutes; then serve hot or at room temperature. Garnish with basil flowers if you like.

*Yield: 8 or 10 servings*

### BLACKBERRY-ALMOND TART

TOTAL TIME: 1½ HOURS,

PLUS AT LEAST 2 HOURS CHILLING;

HANDS-ON TIME: 1 HOUR

*This is a streamlined take on the blackberry-almond tarts that executive pastry chef Elsie Rhodes makes at Pain D'Avignon. The combination of inky berries and sweet almond make this a showstopper dessert.*

#### FOR THE CRUST:

- 15 tablespoons (1⅞ sticks)  
unsalted butter,  
at room temperature
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1½ cups pastry flour  
(plus extra for work surface)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ⅓ teaspoon table salt

#### FOR THE FILLING:

- 6 ounces almond paste



BLACKBERRY-ALMOND TART



- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) salted butter,  
at room temperature**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 2 large eggs**
- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour**
- 1½ pints blackberries**
- ¼ cup sliced almonds**
- Confectioners' sugar (for dusting)**

First, make the crust: Using a standing or handheld electric mixer, beat the butter and sugar together at medium speed until pale in color, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg and beat well. Add the flour, vanilla, and salt, and mix until combined. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured counter and knead 2 or 3 times; then form into a disk and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

Once the dough is chilled, roll it out on a lightly floured counter into a circle about ¼ inch thick. Transfer the dough to a 9-inch tart pan with removable rim and press it into the sides of the pan. Run a rolling pin over the edges to trim any excess dough. Refrigerate the crust while you prepare the filling.

Preheat your oven to 350° and set a rack to the bottom position. To make the filling, use a standing or handheld mixer to cream the almond paste with the butter and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Scrape down the sides of the bowl periodically. With the mixer on low speed, add the flour and beat just until blended.

Pour the filling into the prepared shell and use an offset spatula to smooth the top. Press the blackberries down into the filling, distributing them evenly throughout. Top with the sliced almonds.

Put the tart on a rimmed baking sheet and transfer to the oven. Bake until golden brown on top, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack; then remove the rim of the tart pan and serve warm or at room temperature, garnished with a light dusting of confectioners' sugar. *Yield: 8 to 10 servings* 🍷