

How to Cook a Whole Live Lobster

BOILING is one of the easiest ways to cook a lobster, and is usually preferable. First, choose a pot that is large enough to hold sufficient water to cover the lobsters completely. For a good rule of thumb, use 2½ quarts of water for each lobster. Cover and bring the water to a rolling boil and season to taste. Place the lobsters in the boiling water claws first. Begin timing immediately when the water comes back to a boil, using the boiling times listed below. *OR*, cover the pot and simmer about 15 minutes for a 1 to 1¼-pound hard-shell lobster. If you have a new soft-shell lobster, reduce boiling or steaming time by 3 minutes. Do not overcook, as the lobster meat will become too “rubbery.” Shell will turn a bright red, the two front antennae will pull out easily, and the meat will be white when the lobster is done.

STEAMING lobsters is an alternative. To do so, steam them in a steamer basket, above about 2½" of boiling water, or seawater, in a covered pot. Steam is hotter than boiling water, so your cooking time should be reduced.

STEAMING time

1 - 1¼ lbs. 12 - 15 minutes
1½ - 2 lbs. 15 - 18 minutes
2 - 4 lbs. 18 - 22 minutes
4 - 6 lbs. 22 - 30 minutes

BOILING time *from second boil*

1 - 1¼ lbs. 12 - 15 minutes
1½ - 2 lbs. 15 - 18 minutes
2 - 4 lbs. 18 - 22 minutes
4 - 6 lbs. 22 - 30 minutes

How to Crack and Eat a Lobster

1. Twist off both claws and the attached knuckles.
2. Crack both claws and knuckles with a nutcracker, back side of a knife, or a lobster mallet.
3. Twist off the movable part of the claw and peel away claw pieces to expose and remove the claw meat.
4. Separate the tail from the body by arching and twisting until it breaks.
5. Break off each tail flipper and pinch the meat out.
6. Insert a fork about an inch into tail opening on the underside. While holding tail in one hand, twist and pull fork with the other. The tail meat should come out as one whole piece. Remove and discard the black vein which runs the length of the tail meat.
7. Unhinge the back shell from the body. The green part in the body cavity is the “tomalley” and some consider this the most delicious part of the lobster. The coral-colored roe is also edible.
8. Turn the lobster body over and break it open by cracking it apart sideways, or by using kitchen shears. Lobster meat lies in the pockets where the small walking legs are attached.
9. The small walking legs also contain excellent meat so pick off each leg and squeeze the meat out between your teeth. Serve with individual sauce dishes of melted salted butter for dipping.