

Vanessa Ziff Lasdon

Mock Proposal: Reinventing Print Media for the Web

Browsing through the September issue of one of my long-time favorites, *Sunset Magazine*, I came across a 7-page information-rich article entitled, "Digging for Dinner" that's just begging to be "webified."

The premise: "Author of *Fat of the Land* Langdon Cook tells us how to hunt for dinner in oceans and bays. It's a culinary adventure anyone can try."

What's webifiable:

- 👍 A gorgeous photo series with captions
- 👍 Cook's hunky clam-digging gear (Gore-Tex jacket, gloves, equipment, boots)
 - Perfect e-commerce opportunity
- 👍 A mini photo tour of Copalis Beach off the coast of Washington State
- 👍 Inline or post-article hyperlinks
- 👍 Video offering step-by-step pointers on how to get started with foraging the beaches
- 👍 Video on tips for how to cook up what you bag
- 👍 Image rollovers with captions of the different types of catches available, depending on the a.) novice b.) intermediate c.) advanced forager
- 👍 Quick graphic oceanography lesson on tides and habitats, with images of what shellfish you can find at which tide and depth.
- 👍 Spotlights on other clam-digging hotspots (ex: Tillamook Bay, Puget Sound)
- 👍 A "Get Started" info section with more links and e-commerce opportunities
 - "Take a Class" (with author – see websites)
 - "DIY" (buy a license, consult tide charts...)
 - "Find Foraging Hot Spots" (government and state websites)
 - "Read More" (buy author's book)
- 👍 Shellfish recipes, of course (downloadable, printable, shareable every which way)
- 👍 Reader involvement and user-generated content options
 - social media
 - comments & discussion
 - "share your pics and stories"
- 👍 Promotion opportunities (weekend trip to Copalis Beach + class with author, win author's book, get the garb, etc.)

Vanessa Ziff Lasdon
Mock Proposal: Reinventing Print Content for the Web

“Digging for Dinner” – *Sunset Magazine* Excerpt September, 2011



BEST CATCHES FOR NEWBIES



1. Littlenecks are the West Coast's answer to steams and among the easiest of clams for beginners (including children) to harvest, because they can be dug just a few inches from the surface with a garden cultivator. Both species in the West (the native littleneck and the Manila clam) prefer grassy or muddy beaches from Alaska to Mexico. Hot spots include Tillamook Bay in Oregon and Washington's Puget Sound. Harvest them year-round. For where to go, see "Get Started" (page 86).

2. Mussels live in colonies, attaching themselves to rocks, piers, and pylons by filaments known as a byssus, or beard. There are two varieties: the California mussel, which are larger and live on ocean beaches, and the smaller bay mussel, which live in more protected waters. Getting a mussel can be as easy as picking fruit from a tree. Just use your fingers and some olive grease to pry them off rocks. Often they're ignored by foragers because of the smelly barnacles, limpets, and other forest of sea life that attach to the shell, but the unadorned mussels are easy to brush off. Be aware that mussels are susceptible to toxic red tides during warmer months; check with fish and game/wildlife departments (page 86).

3. Razor clams live on sandy, storm-tossed ocean beaches from Alaska to California, where they can be found during the lowest tides each month, with seasons varying from state to state. You'll need a clam gun and you have to be quick, because these bivalves' muscular feet dig themselves out of trouble before you can say "beehatted clam" and a cold Rainier. In Washington, the opening of clam season (fall into spring, a weekend per month) can attract thousands of clambers on one beach. Look for razor clam locations and openings on department of fish and game/wildlife websites (page 86).

For the more advanced forager

Dungeness crab, the prominent crab south of Alaska, are found up and down the coast below the low-tide mark and—more often—higher. To catch them, you'll need to set a baited crab trap or rig in 10 to 100 feet of water. Some crabbers use dipnets or even dows for them. Winter is peak time for razor; it peaks very by state.

Gardocks (pronounced "genny-dicks") are the largest burrowing clams in the world. You'll need to dig deep (by at least a foot) for these clams during especially low tides on muddy bays. Puget Sound is a hot spot for gardocks, while papers, a gardock relative, can be dug up and down the West Coast.

Pacific squid are commonly harvested from Alaska to Mexico, catching them recreationally is a challenge. On Puget Sound, hobbyists look for squid from piers at night, using spotlights, trout rods, and glow-in-the-dark lures called squid jigs. A boat and heavier tackle are needed for large Humboldt squid.

Pacific oysters can be found only north of Oregon on public beaches (but you can find them in private shellfish beds and U-pick oyster farms from California to Alaska). Look for colonies at the low-tide level, often in estuaries where fresh water mixes with salt water. Oysters taste best during the colder months.

BECOME A SEAFOOD FORAGER

Gear up



For littlenecks, hand trowel or long-handled garden cultivator (low \$)

For razors, if you're a beginner, clam gun (low \$)

For razors, small angled shovel specifically designed for them (low)

For gardocks and papers, shovel (low)

For razors, mesh bag (a bucket would work, too) (low)

For shellfish other than razors, bucket (low)

For all, rubber boots, maybe even a pair of hip or chest waders.

For all, rain slicker or windbreaker.

• Clamming tools available at West Marine (CA, OR, and WA) and Wholesale Sports Outdoor Clothing (OR, WA). Also at hardware stores near clamming areas.

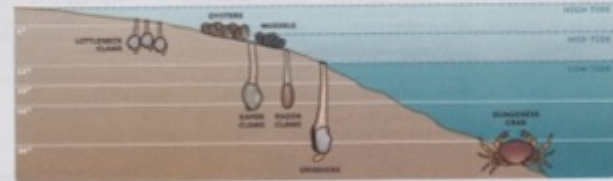
Pointers on catching a razor clam

A. When the tide recedes, look for the show (a quarter-size dimple made from the bivalve's siphon). **B.** Center your gun over the show and quickly work it several inches into the sand. Place your thumb over the air vent on the top and remove the plug of sand. **C.** If the clam isn't in the plug, try again or reach down into the hole. **D.** Admire your catch before tucking it into the mesh bag looped around your belt.



Know tides and habitats

Clams, oysters, and other shellfish are adapted to particular conditions. For example, some clams like sand, others like mud. Some like to burrow deep, some shallow. Certain ocean mussels prefer crashing waves. Once you understand which environment each shellfish likes, you can hunt them when the tides cooperate—they vary according to the time of day and the season.



TOP SHELLFISH RECIPES



Pasta alle vongole

SERVES 6 | 35 MINUTES

If freshly dug clams seem especially sandy, soak them in a bucket of clean salt water for a few hours. The liquor (juice) from the cooked clams is the key sauce ingredient.

- Salt (optional)**
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 4 large garlic cloves, chopped
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- About ¼ cup dry white wine
- ¼ tsp. red chile flakes
- 3 large plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 lb. dried linguine
- 4 dozen littleneck clams, preferably small (4 to 5 lbs.), scrubbed and rinsed
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for pasta. Meanwhile, sauté shallot and garlic in oil in another large pot over medium-high heat until softened, 3 minutes. Add ¼ cup wine and cook 1 minute. Stir in chile flakes and tomatoes; cook 1 to 2 minutes.

2. Boil pasta 5 to 6 minutes, or until half-way done. Meanwhile, add clams to garlic mixture, increase heat to high, and cook, covered, 5 minutes.

3. Scoop out ¼ cup pasta water and reserve. Drain pasta and add to pan with clams. Cook together, covered, stirring occasionally, until pasta is al dente and clams have opened, 5 to 6 minutes. Add some pasta water or more wine if you want a juicier sauce. Discard any unopened clams. Toss pasta and clams with parsley.

SEE LISTINGS FOR THE BEST SHELLFISH RECIPES AND MORE IDEAS. VISIT www.epicurious.com FOR MORE IDEAS.

September 2011 81

BEACH SEASON FORAL



Thai red curry mussels

Thai red curry mussels

SERVES 4 TO 6 | 25 MINUTES

Get started

TAKE A CLAM Long beaches stretch throughout the year on South Puget Sound (see next pages), so you'll go far to find a good clam spot. Register at spwr.org. For more info, go to the-land.blogspot.com.

DO IT Buy a state-licensed annual fishing or shellfish license (C-A fishing tag, OR shellfish tag, or A shellfish tag). Prepare a good shellfish spot, consult tide charts (seawaterfalls.com/shellfish.html), grab your gear, and go.

FIND FORAGING HOT SPOTS Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (www.dfwd.state.or.us/foraging/), and California Department of Fish and Game ([dfg.ca.gov/waters/fishing.asp](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/waters/fishing.asp)).



READ MORE *Eat of the Land: Adventures of a Post-Culinary Forager* (Skowronek, 2009, \$15)

Mussels' rich taste of the sea goes beautifully with spicy-sweet curries like this one, but you can also make the dish with littleneck clams or a mixture of the two. You'll want a loaf of crusty bread or a pot of jasmine rice on hand to sop up the sauce.

- 1 shallot, chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp. peanut oil
- 3 stalk lemongrass, cut into 3-in. pieces and crushed with a mallet or hammer
- 1 can (about 14 oz.) coconut milk
- 2 tbsp. Thai red curry paste*
- 2 tbsp. Thai or Vietnamese fish sauce
- 1 tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 3 lbs. mussels, scrubbed and beards* pulled off
- ¼ cup roughly chopped fresh basil leaves, plus sliced leaves
- 2 limes, cut into wedges

1. Sauté shallot and garlic in oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat until very fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add lemongrass and cook 1 to 2 more minutes. Pour in coconut milk, then stir in curry paste, fish sauce, and sugar. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil.

2. Add mussels, stir until well coated, and cover. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mussels open, 5 minutes. Stir in chopped basil and spoon into wide, shallow bowls, discarding any unopened mussels. Garnish with sliced basil and serve with lime. *Find curry paste in your market. (Asian-food aisle. A mussel's "beard" is the clamp of filaments it uses to attach itself to rocks.)

SEE LISTINGS FOR THE BEST SHELLFISH RECIPES AND MORE IDEAS. VISIT www.epicurious.com FOR MORE IDEAS.

Beer-battered razor clams

SERVES 4 TO 6 | 1½ HOURS

Add extra zing to the clams with spices and lemon zest—and make sure to use a single layer, since more complex microbrews can overwhelm the flavor. Unlike littlenecks or mussels, razors require cleaning, but it's worth it; for how, go to smat.com/razorclams.

- Vegetable oil for frying**
- 1 large egg
- 2½ cups flour
- Zest of 1 lemon
- ¼ tsp. each paprika and cayenne
- About 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 bottle (12 oz.) lager beer such as Rainier or Heineken, at room temperature
- 3 lbs. razor clams in the shell*, cleaned, or use 2½ lbs. cleaned razor clam meat or other clam meat, or calamari tubes (cut into rings) and tentacles
- Lemon wedges

1. Fill a large, deep pot with 1½ in. oil, insert a deep-fry thermometer, and bring to 375° over medium-high heat. Preheat oven to 200°.

2. Whisk egg in a large bowl to blend. Add flour and seasonings, but don't mix. Add beer just before using (so batter keeps some bubbles); this will make the coating light and crisp).

3. Add clams to batter and stir to coat well. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, lift out a spoonful of clams, draining excess batter; lower into oil, shaking spoon a bit to separate clumps. Stand back (clams may splatter) and cook until golden all over, turning once, 1½ to 2 minutes; adjust heat as needed to keep oil at 375°.

4. Transfer clams to a baking sheet lined with paper towels. Sprinkle lightly with salt and keep warm in oven while you cook remaining clams. Serve immediately with lemon wedges and more salt to taste.

*In season, buy razor clams in the shell at specialty fish shops and from wildatom seafood.com (56.99/lb.); the website also sells frozen cleaned razor clam meat year-round, (19.99).

SEE LISTINGS FOR THE BEST SHELLFISH RECIPES AND MORE IDEAS. VISIT www.epicurious.com FOR MORE IDEAS.