

Grilled Lobster with Garlic-Lemon-Herb Butter

Kathy's Take: If you've never grilled lobster outdoors over an open fire, you're in for a treat. This lobster is cooked over indirect heat—meaning the coals are pushed off to one side (or a gas grill is only heated on one side), allowing the lobster to cook slowly and become moist, slightly smoky, and infused with garlic, herbs, and butter. If you are squeamish about the idea of cutting a live lobster, ask your fish store to do it for you, but be sure to cook the lobsters within an hour after they have been cut.

Your best bet for this recipe is to use a soft shell lobster. Since the shell is softer, it's easier to cut the lobster down the middle. And because of the soft shell, the heat of the grill cooks the lobster more evenly and quickly. If you're working with hard shell lobsters you may need to add another 2 to 3 minutes to the cooking time.

Recipe:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Generous grinding black pepper
Four 1 1/2-pound live lobsters, preferably soft shell
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Place the butter and garlic in a small saucepan and simmer over low heat for about 4 minutes, or until the butter is bubbling and the garlic has softened. Remove from the heat and add the chives, thyme, basil, tarragon, lemon juice and pepper and stir well to mix all the ingredients. The butter can be made several hours ahead of time; cover and refrigerate until ready to cook the lobsters.

Preheat the grill for indirect heat, pushing the hot coals off to one side and leaving the other side without direct heat. When working with a gas grill simply heat only one side of the grill until it reaches about 400 degrees F.

Meanwhile, prepare the lobsters: Place them on a clean work surface, shell-side down. One at a time, place a tea towel over the lobster's head and plunge a knife into the body directly below the head and split the lobster open, cutting it down the middle, almost all the way through. The lobster should still be attached and not separated into 2 halves. (This technique may seem gruesome, but many experts claim it's more humane than plunging the poor things into boiling water.) Remove and discard the sac at the top of the head. Alternately, have your fish store cut the lobster for you.

Divide the garlic-lemon-herb butter between the lobsters, placing it in the body and throughout the tail of each, pushing the butter into the meat.

Place the lobsters on the side of the grill without the direct heat, shell-side down, so that you don't lose any juices. Cover the grill and cook for about 15 minutes. Remove the cover and cook for another 2 to 6 minutes, depending on the size of your lobsters, until the tail meat feels just firm, and not soft and raw. The tomalley or liver should not be a dark green but a paler more cooked looking green. Remove from the hot grill, place on a platter, and scatter with the lemon wedges. Serves 4.