

DUNGENESS CRAB CAKES

with Tangy Rémoulade

SERVES 8 AS AN APPETIZER, 4 AS A MAIN COURSE

DUNGENESS CRAB CAKES ARE THE QUINTESSENTIAL SEATTLE DISH, and there is much debate around town about which restaurant makes the best. Some local chefs like to add unusual ingredients to their crab cakes, but our only twist is a bit of cheese, which adds richness without overpowering the crab. We use Dungeness for its sweet crab flavor, but blue crabmeat can be substituted. To minimize last-minute preparation, you can refrigerate the crab cakes for several hours before cooking. Allow them to come to room temperature, uncovered, for at least 15 minutes before cooking, as slightly warmer cakes hold together better during cooking. Serving the crab cakes over fresh spinach with a light vinaigrette completes a lunch or dinner.

2 to 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 green onion (white and green parts),
thinly sliced
1 stalk celery, diced
1/4 red bell pepper, diced
1 pound (3 cups) cooked lump crabmeat,
preferably Dungeness, rinsed and
drained
1 to 2 large eggs
2 small garlic cloves, minced

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning
1/4 cup Basic Mayonnaise (page 234) or
any store-bought mayonnaise
1 ounce semihard cheese (page 23),
grated (1/4 cup)
2 1/2 cups finely ground fresh bread
crumbs
Tangy Rémoulade (recipe follows)

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter and add the green onion, celery, and bell pepper. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring gently, until just softened. Remove the vegetables from the pan to a small plate or bowl and allow them to cool.

Place the crabmeat in a medium bowl and pick through it with your hands, removing any pieces of shell. In a small bowl, beat together 1 egg and the garlic, Worcestershire sauce, Old Bay, and mayonnaise. Add the egg mixture and cooled vegetables to the crabmeat and combine gently but thoroughly with a spatula or wooden spoon. Add the cheese and bread crumbs to the crabmeat and gently mix with your hands until evenly combined.

Divide the crabmeat mixture into 8 equal parts (about 3/4 cup each) and form with your hands into patties approximately 3/4 inch thick, pressing very firmly so the cakes stick together. (Moistening your hands with water will help keep the crab from sticking to them.) If the cakes do not hold together, dump them back in the bowl, beat the second egg in a small bowl, and add half the egg. Mix thoroughly to combine and form the crab cakes again. Place the crab cakes on a plate until ready to cook.