

# IPSWICH BELLY CLAMS

URNS THE STOMACHS OF THOSE NOT IN THE KNOW. HOWEVER, NEW ENGLAND CLAM “AFICIONADOS” LOVE ‘EM! SERVED BY NONE OTHER THAN THE CHOWDER HOUSE WITHIN 75 MILES, THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THE “BELLY CLAMS” AS A HARD-TO-GET DELICACY APPRECIATE GREATLY THAT WE CARRY THEM.

Maybe in Manhattan, possibly at some Jersey Shore seasonal shack, but you must get to Connecticut to find them with any regularity. The fried ones are pretty easy to come by year around, but the “steamas,” and they are the real steamers, are very seasonal. This soft-shell clam is also known as Manninose, piss clam, long-neck clam, steamer, Ipswich clam, and belly clam. Its shell is so thin and brittle that you can easily snap it into pieces with your fingers. The entire clam is too big to fit inside its shell. The siphon (also called the snout or neck) hangs out. They’re called piss clams, because the siphon often sticks up through the sand, and when you walk by, they squirt you.

When you are eating steamed soft-shell clams, remove the thing that looks like a sock, rinse the clam in clam juice, and dip in melted butter. Some of our Massachusetts purist friends don’t rinse or dip, and have survived. The sand probably makes their teeth nice and smooth.

