

## Gathering and Cooking Mussels

Contributed by Jamanda

Mussels are delicious, easy to find and stay still while you're hunting them...

First find a nice, clean beach, well away from towns, and sewage outlets.

This is in North Cornwall, and is a combination of sandy and rocky bits.

Common wisdom is that you don't do this during the Summer, when there isn't an R in the month, but many people do. Obviously the mussels don't want to be hanging around once picked.

This trip was on 2nd February.

And here they are - so many they make the rocks look black from a distance.

The mussels are attached to the rocks by a tough, adhesive protein designed to hold them on the rocks though the roughest seas.

The best way to pull them off is by twisting.

Don't get the biggest ones nor the tiny ones. About 1" to 1 1/2" is best. Nice and plump, but not chewy.

Now, if you are feeling very wild, light a fire on the beach, lay some damp seaweed over the embers and put the mussels on top. They will cook in the steam and you can eat them as soon as they open up.

Or you can take them home and do some culinary magic.

First clean off any of the adhesive protein (sometimes called the beard) by pulling it off. Discard any that are damaged or not firmly closed at this stage.

Then put them in a pan with some liquid and steam them open.

For some recipes you need to pull the top shell off. Discard any that haven't opened.

A simple way to cook them is Parsley stuffed mussels, simply steam the mussels in white wine until opened, then mix up a good load of chopped parsley, three finely chopped garlic cloves, a couple of tablespoons of parmesan, a generous few twists of black pepper and a good slosh of olive oil to loosen it. Twist off half the shell and arrange the mussels in an oven-proof dish, spoon over the mixture and grill for two minutes.

(Thanks to Jonnyboy for that recipe)

or you could make mouclade

What ever way you choose to cook them, they are delicious!

If you have any questions or suggestions please raise them on our forums. \_\_\_\_\_