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On Bisqueing a Lobster

Joseph Dugan
Cedarville University

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ON BISQUEING A LOBSTER

Joseph Dugan

Pick a lobster, Isabella. Boil it alive. Boil it in seasoned butter; make lobster bisque.

It is a simple recipe.

You will need wine, to begin with. Avoid the blended chardonnay on sale for six ninety-nine at your local Kroger. It is vinified en masse with a random montage of varietals. It has no body; it does not breathe. Rather, walk briskly to the nearest Merchant of Venice. Ignore the sales and specials; go to the French aisle, and select a glistening reserve Chablis. Do not be fooled by the bottle. Poor wines are ostentatious; the best are deceptively muted.

Purchase the wine, and carry it home in a small paper bag with paper handles.

Chop your vegetables. Lobster bisque is only as good as the produce you select. Your tomatoes must be firm and sun-ripened; they must be orange-red, not bloody or yellow. The recipe will call for a white onion. Add a second, smaller one, and toss in a few bits of turnip. You will not regret this decision. The turnip gives the bisque a rich quality it often lacks in three-star bistros.

Try not to cut your finger, but if you do, let the blood run for a minute. Then open the chipped medicine cabinet in your tiny bathroom and fish out a band-aid. Slap it on, and return to your bisque.

Once the mixture bubbles, simmer. Allow the stew to cool a bit; having done this, pour it into your blender and grind it up. Bisque must be worthless before it can become perfect. Make it smooth. It will look strange, like pink corn mash, and it will smell strong. Do not worry; this is part of the process. Making lobster bisque requires a sense of otherness, an eye for the future. You will be rewarded in the end.

Bring the mash back to a boil; add the cream and chicken stock. Now watch as your dish transforms into a thick soup. It will smell sweet and good, and you will want to taste it. Resist the urge; soon you will feast. Salt and pepper to taste.

Pour the steaming bisque onto a plate. It is a food of the gods; the finest ingredients boiled down to their simplest forms, mixed with cream and served with crusty baguette.

And it makes you think, Isabella.