



Menton Butter Soup

The signature dish of Barbara Lynch's [Menton](#), the Butter Soup has been a favorite amuse or first course since the restaurant opened in 2010. Gently cooked shellfish, caviar, high-quality butter, and a milk and honey foam mix together to evoke memories of eating shellfish dipped in drawn butter by the New England Seashore.

At Menton, we use Babette's butter made by our friend Diane St Clair at [Animal Farm](#) in Vermont. It is hand-churned, high-fat butter made from our Jersey cow (Babette) who has been supplying our restaurants [No 9 Park](#) and Menton with butter for over 10 years. You can use whatever high-quality butter is available, as long as it is unsalted. Also feel free to substitute the shellfish for the best-looking selections from your local fish market. We include our favorites here.

Serves 4 as an appetizer

Shellfish

12 ea littleneck clams, rinsed
4 ea razor clams (when available)
12 ea mussels, rinsed
4 ea diver scallops, rinsed (or 16-20 ea bay scallops when in season)
2 ea 1-lb lobsters
2 ea shallots, chopped
1 small bundle of thyme sprigs
2 cups of dry white wine

Place the littleneck clams in a pot with $\frac{1}{2}$ of a chopped shallot and a few thyme sprigs. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of white wine. Cover the pot with a tight-fitting lid or seal tightly with tin foil. Cook over medium-high heat, until wine begins to boil and steam. Reduce to low heat and cook for 3-4 minutes covered, until all the clams have opened. Remove clams from pot and let cool. Pick clam meat from shells; reserve meat and discard shells.

Repeat the process above with the mussels and razor clams.

Separate the lobster tails and claws from the bodies. In a steamer or pot of boiling water, cook the tails for 5 minutes and the claws for 7 minutes, or until the meat is cooked through. Remove lobster tails and claws from the pot and let cool. Pick meat from shells and cut into roughly 1 oz pieces; reserve meat and discard shells.

Bring a small portion of the butter soup (see recipe below) to a gentle simmer. Cook the scallops gently in the butter soup until just barely cooked through.

Butter Soup

¼ cup water

1.5 lb unsalted butter, cut into 1 inch

cubes salt

lemons for juicing

½ cup chives, finely chopped

In a heavy-bottomed 4-qt pot, bring the water to a simmer and add a pinch of salt. Add the butter, a few cubes at a time, whisking gently to let the butter emulsify. Do not add too quickly; let the soup come back to a gentle simmer before adding more butter. Once all of the butter is added, the soup should be homogenous and emulsified, not separated and broken. Add salt to taste and season with 2 tsp of fresh lemon juice. Just before serving, add the chives.

Honey Foam

1 pt water or vegetable stock

2 Tb milk

2 Tb honey

1 egg yolk

salt

Bring the water or stock, milk, and honey to a simmer, whisking to dissolve the honey. Remove from heat; pour the milk and honey mixture to a small bowl. Vigorously whisk in the egg yolk to create a foam. You can use a hand blender to froth the foam as well. Keep the foam in a warm place, froth again just before serving.

To plate:

4 sprigs chervil

1-2 oz caviar (or as much as you like!)

Warm the shellfish over medium heat in just enough of the butter soup to surround it, just until everything is hot. Arrange the shellfish in serving bowls, topping each with a dollop of caviar. Pour 2-3 oz of butter soup per bowl; top each with honey foam and garnish with chervil.