

- 4 lobsters
- 8 tablespoons butter , *melted (optional)*
- lemon wedges



Tenderness comes at a price -- summer lobsters are cheap and plentiful, but the more expensive hard-shell lobsters of spring are of premier quality.

See Illustrations Below: [Hard or Soft Shell Lobster?](#)

1. Bring about 1 inch water to boil over high heat in large soup kettle set up with wire rack, pasta insert, or seaweed bed. Add lobster, cover, and return water to boil. Reduce heat to medium-high; steam until lobsters are done, see chart below. Serve immediately with warm butter and lemon wedges.

2. Approximate Steaming Times:

1 Pound Lobster:

8-9 Minutes (soft-shell)
10-11 Minutes (hard-shell)

1 1/4 Pound Lobster:

11 to 12 Minutes (soft-shell)
13 to 14 Minutes (hard-shell)

1 1/2 Pound Lobster:

13 to 14 Minutes (soft-shell)
15 to 16 Minutes (hard-shell)

1 3/4 to 2 Pound Lobster:

17 to 18 Minutes (soft-shell)
about 19 Minutes (hard-shell)

STEP BY STEP: [Hard or Soft Shell Lobster?](#)



Hard-shell lobsters are much meatier than soft-shell. To determine whether a lobster is hard-shell or soft-shell, squeeze the side of the lobster's body; a soft-shell lobster will yield to pressure while a hard-shell will be hard, brittle, and tightly packed.

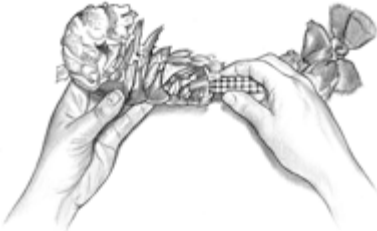
STEP BY STEP: [How to Eat a Lobster \(or Remove Cooked Meat\)](#)



1. Twist the tail to separate it from the body.



2. Twist off the tail flippers.



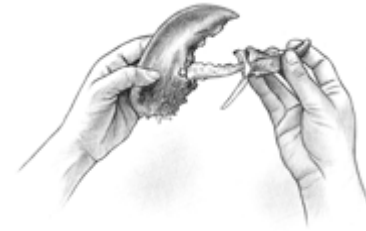
3. Use a fork or your finger to push the tail meat up and out through the wide end of the tail. Pull the tail meat out the other end.



4. Twist a claw appendage off the body.



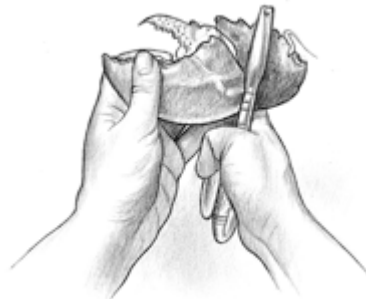
5. Twist the claw from the connecting joint.



6. Remove the pincher portion of the claw. If you use a gentle motion, the meat will often stay attached to the rest of the claw; otherwise, you'll need a cocktail fork to pick out the meat from the shell.



7. If the lobster is a soft-shell, use your hands to break open the claw and remove the meat.



8. If the lobster is a hard-shell, use lobster crackers to break open the claw and remove the meat.



9. Crack open the connecting joint and remove the meat with a cocktail fork. Repeat steps 5 through 9 with the remaining claw.

Source: Cooks Illustrated, 2005