

# LUKE STUART

Brush up your culinary skills with the WhitePepper Chef Academy



Photo: whitepepperonline

**O**n a recent lockdown dog walk I was amazed to see a significant number and variety of clams – including razor, Mya and manila – washed ashore on my local beach.

The seagulls were having a field day! This was a freak event, which made me ponder whether a combination of temporary shallower waters created by the Coastal Frontage Replenishment Project (to maintain the shoreline and beach widths in Poole and Bournemouth) combined with a few stormy days had disturbed local shellfish beds.

Seeing those scattered clams, my thoughts quickly turned to one of my favourite meals, chowder.

Convert this pancetta and leek chowder to a New England version by adding clams or cockles, first steaming the bivalves open with the white wine.

Continue with the recipe, pouring the strained white wine liquor (minus sediment) into the chowder, add the cooked clam meat just before serving.

You can adapt this easy recipe to a vegetarian version by omitting the bacon. ♦

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## A New England Chowder

A walk on my local beach reminded me of one of my favourite cockle-warming meals

### Pancetta & Leek Chowder (Serves 4)

50g pancetta, lardons  
25g butter or oil  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
150g leek, diced and washed  
15g flour  
50g white wine  
125g double cream  
1 medium potato, peeled and diced  
sprig of thyme, leaves only  
salt and white pepper  
lemon juice, to taste

### Method

In a saucepan, gently fry the pancetta to render the fat until golden brown and crisp, stirring occasionally. This takes about 10 minutes. Add the butter or oil to the pan, then add the onion and cook until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and cook for a further minute. Add the diced leek and allow 'to sweat' until slightly wilted (remove and reserve some of the vegetables for garnish). Stir the flour through the vegetable mixture. Pour in the white wine and bring to the boil, stirring all the time,

then add the cream. Tip in the diced potatoes with the thyme and seasoning. Add enough cold water to cover the potatoes. Continue to simmer for approximately 25 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. To finish: add a little lemon juice, taste and adjust the seasoning. Garnish with the reserved vegetables, and serve with hunks of crusty bread.

**Follow my step-by-step video for this recipe at [white-pepper.co.uk](http://white-pepper.co.uk) (click About and go to the Blog and click on Dorset Magazine video recipes).**