



Clams Casino *(adapted from Giada de Laurentis)*

18 to 24 fresh clams, steamed till open
3 slices bacon, chopped fine
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 red pepper, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Salt and pepper to taste
1/3 cup white wine
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
1/4 cup dried Italian flavored bread crumbs

Remove meat from steamed clams, and reserve shells. Chop clams until fine. Return meat to shells and top with a teaspoon white wine. Set aside. Meanwhile in a large sauté pan, cook bacon until crisp then remove from pan and drain on paper towels. Remove all but 1 tablespoon bacon fat from pan. Add butter to pan and sauté onion, red pepper and garlic until vegetables are softened - about 5 minutes. Add Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Place a small amount on top of clams on each shell (approximately 1 tablespoon), and top with crispy bacon pieces. Combine parmesan cheese with dried bread crumbs and sprinkle on top of bacon. Bake in a preheated 500 oven for 5 minutes or until crumbs are browned and clams are hot. Watch carefully during last minute of cooking because the crumbs burn easily. Serve as an appetizer or with pasta and/or a green salad for dinner.