

How to Shuck an Oyster (Hinge Method)



1. Scrub the oyster well under cold, running water to remove mud, dirt and algae. Using a sturdy oyster glove (on the hand holding the oyster), hold the oyster flat side up with the narrow end toward you. (Some shuckers hold the oyster down on a tabletop for more stability.) Insert the tip of the oyster knife into the small opening at the hinge of the oyster. Twist the knife to pop open the shell.

2. To sever the muscle that connects the oyster to its shell, slide the knife blade along the underside of the top shell.



3. Remove the top shell and sever the muscle that attaches the oyster to its lower (cupped) shell. Be careful not to spill out the oyster "liquor" in the bottom shell.

Alternative methods: Some shuckers like to insert the knife at the side or front (opposite end from the hinge) of the oyster to slide it in and sever the top adductor muscle. In commercial shucking houses this is often facilitated by breaking off the edge of the shell to provide an opening for the knife. Finding the separation of the two shell halves without breaking off the edge is quite difficult for most oyster species.

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