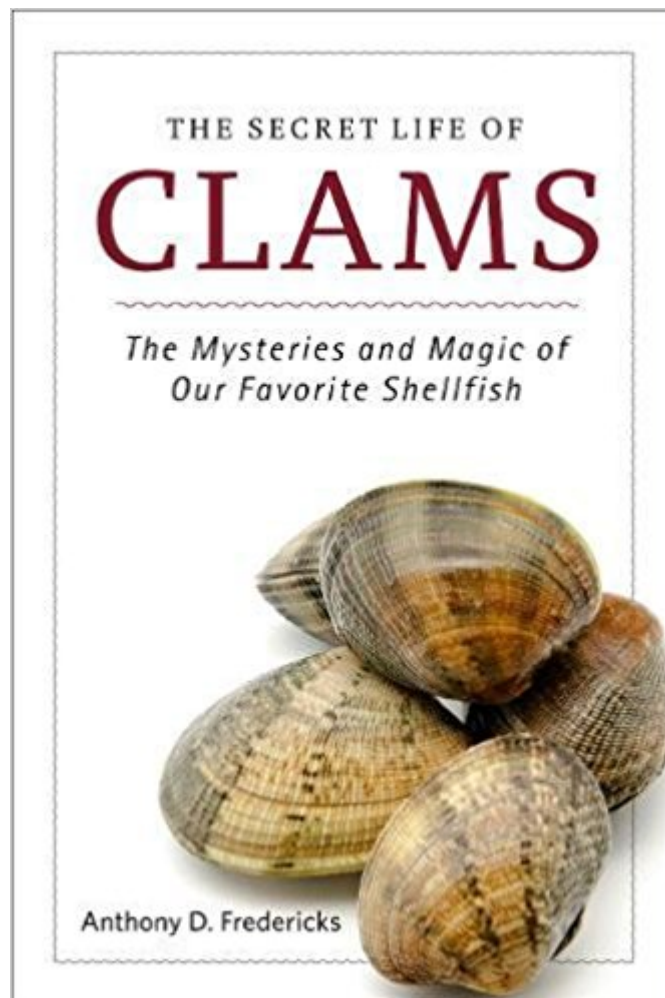




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# The Secret Life Of Clams: The Mysteries And Magic Of Our Favorite Shellfish



## Synopsis

Get up close and personal with an amazing creature that has invaded our lexicon as well as our restaurants. It breathes with tubes, it has no head or brain, it feeds through a filter, and it is the source of dozens of familiar proverbs (â œhappy as a clam!â •). Clams, it turns out, have been worshipped (by the Moche people of ancient Peru), used as money (by the Algonquin Indians), and consumed by people for thousands of years. Yet *The Secret Life of Clams* is the first adult trade book to deal exclusively with this gastronomic treat that is more complex than its simple two shells might reveal. *The Secret Life of Clams* features compelling insights, captivating biology, wry observations, and up-to-the-minute natural history that will keep readers engaged and enthralled. Written by award-winning science author Anthony D. Fredericks, *The Secret Life of Clams* includes a comfortable infusion of humor, up-to-date research, fascinating individuals (scientists and laypeople alike), and the awe of a fellow explorer as he guides readers on a journey of wonder and adventure. Along with an appreciation for oceanic creatures, this is a guidebook for armchair marine biologists everywhere who seek amazing discoveries in concert with compelling narration.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anthony D. Fredericks grew up on the beaches of Southern California, where he spent his youth exploring tide pools, gathering clams, and body-surfingÂ the Pacific coast. He has been a professional educator for more than forty years and has taught at the elementary, secondary, and

college levels. Fredericks is a prolific and award-winning author, having authored nearly four hundred magazine and journal articles along with 150 published books. His books include several college textbooks, a variety of education titles, four dozen children's books, and many nonfiction adult trade books. He resides in Dover, Pennsylvania.

I purchased this book on a bit of a whim. I thought, "Who would or, better yet, why would one write a book about clams?" Such a mundane creature. I received both answers as I quickly found the book to be fascinating, filled with facts, well researched and with an excellent appendix, bibliography, and index. The author has wonderful, relevant "Fast Facts" throughout the book and an excellent use of humor. One would not consider a book about clams to be a "page turner" but that is exactly what it is. There are a number of quotes from famous people to open chapters. Sophia Loren was quoted to open the "steamy" chapter "Sex Among the Bivalves". There are also recommendations for finding the best "clam shack" and the author provides his own recipes for prepared clams. This is an educational and fun read. Definitely worthy of more than five stars but since that's the limit then that is my rating. Bon appetite!!

I am a schoolteacher in Virginia and I thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Fredericks' book on horseshoe crabs and used it extensively as a resource in my classroom. I plan to do the same with this book! Both books are educational, entertaining and enjoyable. He writes with an obvious love for his subject and the ability to communicate science and history with a refreshingly engaging enthusiasm.

They don't have enough secrets to warrant this much attention. Very shellfish little critters, too! Geoducks could hold one's interest of an evening, though. A significant section of the book (about 30 pages), is all about acquiring clams, cleaning clams, and cooking clams.

I admit that I may not have picked it up if not for a slow day at the beach, but the author somehow succeeds in writing an entertaining book about clams. He strikes an amiable balance between information and humour, even if he often sounds like a long-winded uncle sharing corny stories at a kitchen party. Everything from biology to pop culture references is covered. Who knew *Do the Clam* was among Elvis's oeuvre? The subtitle captures what passes for the ironic, unifying theme: how the humble clam is more virtuous than that other shellfish. Tips on how to dig your own and recipes are included, and if that's not happening there's a list of recommended clam shacks and festivals. For those whose attention span is challenged by

the meandering, folksy prose, Fast Facts are sprinkled throughout in popup boxes. The whole package radiates the sentimental warmth of a clambake!

This is a wonderful book! During our summer vacations to the beach, my Grandchildren and I spend hours exploring and examining what washes up with each wave. This book by Dr. Fredericks provides information on the clams in a format that is interesting and informative. The Fast Facts build interest, offer essential information, and can provide key points for discussion and review. I am anxious to make it part of our beach study next summer. As a teacher, I see this as the type of resource that can serve as the basis for a high-impact, student-centered unit of study on the clam. I highly recommend this book!

The author reminds me of a fantastic geology professor I had many years ago. He was always able to make a dull subject interesting. We students looked forward to the classes (and the field trips). This book is just right; not too long, not too short, not too scientific, not too easy, with interesting stories, jokes, recipes, art and diagrams. If you love the ocean, you will love this book.

Behold the clam, humble bivalve of ancient lineage. Until I began reading this book, I never gave much thought to how much this simple creature had infiltrated our daily lives. There is the obvious -- food and cookbooks. But there is also art -- think Botticelli's "Birth of Venus"; furniture -- as a carved decorative motif; vocabulary -- clam up, clammy hands; currency -- wampum or an expression of dollars, like 50 clams; and literature -- Mrs. Hussey's chowder pots in "Moby Dick." Fredericks covers the gamut of all there is to know about clams in a conversational, informative manner, ranging over biological, ecological, cultural, gustatorial, and whimsical fields. After reading this book, I can now pronounce geoduck (it's not how it looks, kind of like quinoa). ~ Roberta Rishel

I never thought that a non-fiction book about (of all things - clams!) would be so enjoyable! But. Mr. Fredericks did just that. The information on clams was fascinating, and the side bars provided much more information - in a humorous way! In fact, The entire book was written with lots of humor, making "The Secret Life of Clams" an excellent read!

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