

# YOUNG TIMES

## How to nab a nipper

Crabbing is great fun. To catch the most crustaceans, grab a bucket and take these tips from fisherman Alex Aitken

I started my career as a trawlerman but now I'm a seafood chef at a restaurant in Dorset, and crabbing with my grandchildren off Mudeford Quay is as close as I get to catching fish. Thanks to what I learnt in my days at sea, though, we catch more crabs than anyone else on the harbour!

Now I'm going to share my tips with you. Anyone can do it, and you're sure to have a bucketful in a few hours.

### What do you need?

A line, a weight, some bait, a bucket, a harbour and a sense of adventure. You can make your own line from any long

piece of string. Tie a stone to the end so it will sink to the sea bed. Now attach any old meat you have left over to the stone to use as bait. The crabs will try to pinch it, so tie it tight (or cheat — put the bait into one of those washing-machine powder tablet bags, and tie that to your weight instead. Bring a bucket and fill it with seawater to put all your crabs in.

### Lines overboard!

Once your line is ready, throw the weight off the side of the jetty. After a few minutes, gently pull up the line (not too fast or the crabs will fall off).

### Crab race

Once you've caught as many crabs as you want to, releasing them is great fun. Tip the bucket out on the slipway of the jetty, each choose a favourite crab and see whose scurries back into the sea first.

## Crab tips

**1** If there are mussels on the beach, smash them to use as bait. Crabs also adore smoked bacon, but caviar for them is sand eels. You can buy these frozen from bait shops, and crabs love them so much they won't want to let go.

**2** If you need to pick up a crab, hold them by thumb and finger just behind the pincers (but beware: they really can give a nasty nip).

**3** Crabs like cool seawater, so on hot summer days keep your bucket in the shade. Don't put too many in one bucket or they will run out of oxygen.



Youngsters with their catch. Crabbing is easy, but steer clear of the pincers

## Win a family crabbing adventure in Dorset

One Young Times reader and his or her family (max five people) will win a two-night stay, including dinner, bed and breakfast, at the Christchurch Harbour Hotel, Mudeford Quay.

Just answer this question: the type of crabs you'll be catching are called the common: a) shore crab, b) bear crab, or c) wall crab.

E-mail your answer to [youngtimes@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:youngtimes@thetimes.co.uk) by midnight on Sunday, August 21.

One randomly selected entrant from all correct entries received will win the above prize. Entrants must be aged 16 or under. Please get your parent or guardian's permission to enter. The Times's decision is final. Information collected will be used only for the purposes of this competition. [christchurch-harbour-hotel.co.uk](http://christchurch-harbour-hotel.co.uk)