

Cajun Shrimp and Grits

Makes 6 Servings

Recipe: by Greg Strahm, The Silver Chef

There are a number of recipes for this iconic cajun dish. Here is my take on this iconic dish. My secret ingredient is Ras el Hanout, a Moroccan spice, which can be made with as few as 7 spices up to 24 different spices. I choose to use my own proprietary blend, which included 12 different spices. It is also available commercially available in the spice aisle. It is a very useful and versatile spice and can be used for both sweet and savory dishes



BACON

5 strips thick sliced bacon, baked crisp and chopped

CHEESE GRITS

2 cups whole milk
1 cup heavy cream
3 cups chicken stock
2 cups coarse ground grits, medium ground are also ok
1 heavy pinch kosher salt
1 cup fontina cheese, shredded
1 cup smoked gouda cheese, shredded
2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup parmesan reggiano, shredded

SHRIMP & GRAVY

2 pounds jumbo shrimp, completely shelled

and deveined

2 tablespoons cajun seasoning, of choice
1 (13-ounce) package hillshire farms cajun chorizo, or andouille sausage, cut into bitesized pieces
1/3 cup all purpose flour
2 tablespoons Better Than Bouillon lobster base, or chicken base
1 large lemon, juiced
3 large cloves garlic, finely minced
more cajun seasoning, to taste for gravy
3 teaspoons ras el hanout
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons butter
1/3 cup all purpose flour
3 1/2 cups chicken stock
flat leaf parsley, for garnish
3 scallions, chopped for garnish

BACON

1) Place bacon on a parchment lined baking sheet and bake in a 400° F oven until crisp. Remove from pan. Allow to cool and then crumble. Empty dripping into a container and save in refrigerator for later use.

GRITS

1) In a large sauce pan bring milk, cream, and stock just to the boiling point. Gradually stir in the grits. Reduce heat to low, cover and allow to cook for about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent scorching on bottom. Remove

2) Add the cheeses and stir to melt and incorporate. Add a more cream to thin them out if they are too thick. Should be loose but not runny. Adjust seasoning. Cover and set aside.

SHRIMP & ANDOUILLE SAUSAGE & SAUCE

1) Place peeled and deveined shrimp in a large bowl and season with cajun seasoning and ras el hanout, salt and pepper.

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2) In a large pan melt butter and drippings over medium heat. Cook shrimp for 1 1/2 minutes per side and pink or internal temp of 145°F. Remove and set aside.

3) Add andouille sausage until has browned evenly. Add additional 2 tablespoons butter and bacon drippings and allow to melt. Add celery, onions, green bell pepper, and jalapeno pepper, and cook until soft and cooked down. Add the garlic and stir till fragrant. Stir in the tomato paste, lemon juice, and Better Than Boullion chicken base.

4) Add flour and stir creating a roux. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Add more cajun spice to taste and stir. Add half the chicken stock and continue stirring add more as needed until sauce thickens to the consistency of a silky gravy.

5) Add shrimp back to pan to reheat. Retain some shrimp for garnish.

ASSEMBLING

1) Place a bed of grits on a plate. Spoon gravy over grits. Arrange extra shrimp on top and garnish with crumbled bacon, parsley, and scallions and serve.