

Shrimp Cocktail with Three Sauces

You're doing it wrong: We know what you're thinking. Shrimp cocktail? Like those sad, round plastic rings of rubbery shrimp crammed around a pot of way-too-sweet cocktail sauce? Nooooo. Not these guys. This is how you get it done, the right way. Treat your shrimp properly. Don't just throw them in boiling water and let them get tough and chewy. Delicately flavor the poaching liquid with aromatics (think celery, peppercorns, bay and thyme). Once the liquid is infused and simmering, cut the heat before adding the shrimp. This is no cauldron. This is a slow, warm bath. No stress, no worries. And for that little bit of effort, you get plump, tender shrimp. The way it should be. As for sauces, sure you want a classic cocktail -- just not too sweet. But how about a creamy, herbaceous green goddess and retro mustard curry, too? It's not just classic. It's classy.

Ingredients

the shrimp

6 cups water
1 cup white wine
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
1 rib celery, chopped
1 small onion (about 2 ounces), chopped
10 black peppercorns
2 teaspoons kosher salt
2 bay leaves
5 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley
5 sprigs fresh thyme

1 pound 16/20 (“extra jumbo”) shrimp, shell on, deveined
Ice

the cocktail sauce

1/3 cup ketchup
2 teaspoons horseradish
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon zest (half a small lemon)
1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon hot sauce (Tabasco) (about 6 drops), or to taste

the green goddess

1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon sour cream
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1 anchovy fillet, mashed to a paste with a fork OR 1/4 teaspoon anchovy paste
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives
1 tablespoon minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
Couple grinds black pepper

the curry mustard

1/3 cup yellow mustard
1½ teaspoons mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon molasses
1/2 teaspoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon fresh lime zest

special equipment

kitchen twine

Directions

for the dipping sauces

Cocktail sauce: Stir together the ketchup, horseradish, lemon zest, lemon juice and hot sauce in a small bowl. (Makes about 1/3 cup.)

Green goddess: Stir together the mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice, vinegar, mashed anchovy, chives, parsley and pepper in a small bowl. (Makes about 1/3 cup.)

Curry mustard: Stir together the mustard, mayonnaise, molasses, curry and lime zest in a small bowl. (Makes about 1/3 cup.)

for the shrimp

Pour the water, wine and lemon juice into a large saucepan. Drop in the celery, onion and peppercorns. Stir in the salt. Wrap the parsley and thyme sprigs in between the bay leaves, tie the bundle together with kitchen twine, and drop it into the liquid. Turn the heat to medium. Watch the water. After about 4 minutes, bubbles will appear on the bottom on the pan. At around 6 minutes, the bubbles will rise to the surface. After about 8 minutes, the liquid should start to steam. When that happens, turn the heat to medium-low and let steep, uncovered, to infuse the liquid with the aromatics, about 5 minutes.

Fill a large bowl with ice and water and place near the stove.

Turn the heat off under the saucepan and add the shrimp. Stir to distribute the shrimp around the poaching liquid. After 2 to 3 minutes, the shrimp shells will turn pink and the flesh opaque and cooked through. With a slotted spoon, remove immediately to the ice bath. Stir the shrimp in the ice bath just until they are cool, less than a minute. Remove

to a bowl and peel, leaving the tails on. Transfer to a serving platter and serve with dipping sauces.

Cook's Note

Strained poaching liquid can be frozen in small portions for other uses such as risotto or soup -- or even for cooking your next batch of poached shrimp -- without losing any flavor.

total time: 40 minutes

active prep: 40 minutes

serves: 4

difficulty: easy