

Shrimp and Pancetta Po' Boy

If you were a streetcar worker on strike in 1929 New Orleans, you probably knew to head to the Martin brothers' sandwich and coffee establishment where you'd be fed for free. The Martins would say, "Here comes another poor boy," and then hand them a sandwich. This "poor boy" sandwich became a New Orleans masterpiece. It inspired all sorts of fillings and is served in corner bodegas and white tablecloth restaurants alike. We prefer the casual way, sitting outside if we can, a bag of Zapp's chips on the table, and a cold beer beside us. Or shrimp and pancetta po' boy will keep the good times rolling.

See Cook's Note on judging the temperature of your frying oil without a thermometer.

Ingredients

Remoulade

½ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and chopped
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon hot sauce, optional
½ teaspoon sugar

Shrimp

About 4 cups vegetable oil
¼ teaspoon cayenne
1 1/4 pounds large shrimp, cleaned, head and tail removed, patted dry
12 to 15 thin slices pancetta (9 ounces)
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
½ cup cornmeal
½ teaspoon cayenne

Assembly

2 small, crusty French bread loaves or good hoagie rolls
Remoulade, from above
Thin slices of good tomatoes
Shredded lettuce
Pickle spears

special equipment

large slotted spoon
large cast-iron skillet or a large, heavy skillet
deep-fry thermometer, optional but preferred
wire rack set inside rimmed baking sheet

Directions

For the Remoulade

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. This can be made a few hours ahead and chilled, covered.

For the Shrimp

Pour vegetable oil to a depth of 1 inch in a large skillet, preferably cast-iron and set a deep-fry thermometer in the oil. Heat over medium heat until the oil reaches 350 degrees. Set a wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet and place on the counter next to the skillet.

Using half a slice of pancetta, wrap each shrimp tightly and place on a baking sheet in single layers.

Put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the flour in one shallow bowl. Beat the eggs in another. Mix the cornmeal, remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour and cayenne in a third. Working in batches, dredge each shrimp carefully, as to not unravel the pancetta, and gently shake off the excess. Slip into hot oil. Fry, turning once, for about 2 minutes or until golden and crisp. Drain shrimp on the wire rack. Some of the pancetta pieces may unravel from the shrimp, but they can be piled on the sandwich together. Let oil come back to temperature between batches.

To Assemble

Split loaves of French bread (or hoagie rolls) in half lengthwise. Spread remoulade on both cut sides of the bread. Generously place shredded lettuce on the bread and add tomato slices. Pile shrimp on top. Cut each in half to make 4 sandwiches. Serve immediately with pickle spears.

Cook's Notes

Don't have a frying thermometer? Insert the handle of a wooden spoon in the hot oil. If bubbles form around the handle, it's ready.

total time: 45 minutes

active prep: 45 minutes

serves: 4

difficulty: *medium*