



Shrimp and Grits

Ingredients

- 5 3/4 cups (1.4 L) homemade or store-bought chicken stock, divided
- 1 pound (450 g) large shrimp, shelled (shells reserved)
- 3/4 pound (340 g) mixed mushrooms, such as cremini, shiitake, and oyster, stemmed and thinly sliced (stems reserved)
- 3/4 teaspoon (3 g) kosher salt, plus more for seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 cup grits, preferably stone-ground (see notes)
- 1 cup grated Gruyère cheese (about 4 ounces; 115 g)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 slices thick-cut bacon (about 4 ounces; 115 g), diced
- Vegetable oil (if needed)
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons (30 g) unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) fresh juice from 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons mixed minced fresh herbs, such as parsley, chives, and tarragon, plus more as garnish

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, combine 5 cups (1.2L) stock with reserved shrimp shells and mushroom trimmings. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 20 minutes. Strain and return stock to saucepan.
2. Meanwhile, combine shrimp, 3/4 teaspoon (3g) salt, baking soda, and cornstarch in a medium bowl and toss to

3. Whisk grits into stock, set over medium-high heat, and bring to a simmer, whisking frequently. Lower heat to a bare simmer and cook, stirring and scraping bottom frequently with a wooden spoon, until grits are fully softened and cooked and have thickened into a spoonable porridge, about 1 hour. Stir in Gruyère cheese until fully melted. Season with salt and pepper and keep grits warm. (A piece of parchment pressed against the surface will help prevent a skin from forming.)
4. In a large skillet, heat bacon over high heat until sizzling. Lower heat to medium and cook, stirring, until bacon has rendered its fat and become crisp, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. You should have 1/4 cup rendered bacon fat in the skillet. Remove all but 1 tablespoon fat and reserve.
5. Return skillet to high heat and heat until very lightly smoking. Add shrimp and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned outside with only a faint trace of translucence remaining in the center of each shrimp. Transfer shrimp to a plate.
6. Add reserved 3 tablespoons bacon fat to skillet, return to medium-high heat, and heat until shimmering. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring, until mushrooms release their liquid, about 3 minutes; scrape any browned bits from bottom of skillet. Continue cooking mushrooms, stirring frequently, until lightly browned, about 6 minutes; if pan becomes too dry, add vegetable oil, 1 tablespoon at a time, to keep it lubricated. Stir in shallot, garlic, and cayenne and cook until shallot and garlic are softened, about 2 minutes.
7. Add remaining 3/4 cup (180ml) stock and scrape up any browned bits on bottom of pan. Stir in shrimp. Lower heat to medium-low and whisk in butter until fully melted and emulsified with the sauce. Remove from heat and whisk in lemon juice. Stir in herbs and season with salt and pepper.
8. Spoon grits into bowls and top with shrimp, mushrooms, and their gravy. Top with reserved crispy bacon and additional herbs for garnish, then serve right away.

Notes

This recipe uses a high ratio of liquid to grits. It will seem very watery at first, but don't despair. Just hang in there and cook those grits, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom, until they've fully thickened. It will happen, and they will be far superior to grits made with less liquid. I highly recommend stone-ground grits if you can find them—do not substitute instant or quick-cooking grits.

Special Equipment

Large saucepan, whisk, slotted spoon