

Cooking Corner: Shrimp appetizers fill Super Bowl bill of fare

by Jennifer Mastroianni

Super Bowl Sunday is the No. 1 at-home party event of the year, even bigger than New Year's Eve. That said, it's likely you are hosting or attending a Bowl bash. Which means get out the recipe box.

PARTY FAVORITE - Beer-Poached Shrimp with homemade cocktail sauce makes an easy and impressive Super Bowl staple. CNS Photo by Manny Franco. Chili, Buffalo wings, dips, meatballs and football-themed sweets are in order of course, but you can score even bigger points with that impressive crowd pleaser known as shrimp.

The tasty crustacean is such a Super Bowl staple, says Jackie Zepeda, a national spokesperson for BJ's Wholesale Club, that the amount the company sells leading up to game day is mind-boggling.

"Enough bags of shrimp," Zepeda says, "to stretch the length of 85 football fields."

You can't beat shrimp cocktail as an appetizer, Zepeda says, and you can make it even tastier by first poaching the shrimp in another Super Bowl staple - beer.

Scented with garlic, lemon and Old Bay, the beer bath infuses the shrimp with subtle flavors that pair perfectly with a garlicky homemade cocktail sauce.

For an easy hot shrimp appetizer, check out Chili-Garlic Shrimp, seasoned the party-pleasing flavors of Buffalo wings. The shrimp is dusted in wing spices, then skillet-sauteed and garnished with cilantro and lime. Whether it's hot or cold shrimp you prefer, both recipes are super easy. Each goes together in 20 minutes from start to finish.

SHRIMP POACHED WITH BEER, OLD BAY AND LEMON

1 (12-ounce) bottle of beer (any kind you like)

2 teaspoons kosher salt

3 lemons, halved

3 bay leaves

1 handful of fresh thyme sprigs

1 head of garlic, split horizontally

1 tablespoon Old Bay seasoning

2 pounds jumbo shrimp, fresh or frozen

Lemon wedges for serving

Yields 8 appetizer servings.

Fill large pot with about 2 quarts of water. Add beer, salt and squeeze in lemon juice. Add squeezed lemon halves, bay leaves, herbs, garlic and Old Bay. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and simmer for 5 minutes to infuse water with the aromas. Reduce heat to medium-low and add shrimp. Simmer, uncovered, for 2 to 3 minutes or until shrimp are bright pink.

Drain shrimp and transfer to a bowl. Chill shrimp thoroughly. When chilled, peel and devein shrimp. Serve with lemon wedges and homemade cocktail sauce (recipe follows).

COCKTAIL SAUCE

1/2 cup ketchup

1/4 cup grated fresh or prepared horseradish

1 teaspoon minced garlic

Juice of 1 lemon

A few drops of hot pepper sauce

Yields 3/4 cup.

Stir together all ingredients in a bowl and chill for about an hour to allow the flavors to come together.

- "Eat This Book" by Tyler Florence (Clarkson Potter, \$32.50).

CHILI-GARLIC SHRIMP

1 pound peeled and deveined fresh large shrimp

1 (1.6-ounce) package buffalo wing seasoning

5 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 teaspoons bottled minced garlic

1/4 teaspoon (or more, to taste) red pepper flakes

1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

2 teaspoons lime juice

Lime wedges (optional)

Yields 4 servings.

Rinse shrimp with cold water, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Combine shrimp and buffalo wing seasoning in large plastic bag and shake to coat evenly. Set aside.

In large skillet over medium heat, combine butter, garlic and red pepper flakes. When butter has melted, increase heat to medium-high, being careful not to burn butter or garlic.

Add shrimp when butter begins to pop and sizzle. Cook and stir for 4 to 5 minutes, or until shrimp are opaque and cooked through. Be careful not to overcook.

Remove pan from heat and stir in cilantro and lime juice. If desired, garnish with lime wedges. Serve hot.

- Sandra Lee's "Sandra Lee Semi-Homemade 20-minute Meals" (Meredith, \$19.95).

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