

Mother's Shrimp Creole

Makes 12 entrees

Shrimp Creole is a staple of French-Spanish New Orleans cuisine. Tomatoes and shrimp are abundant in the climate and geography of south Louisiana. As far as we can tell, the dish is usually made with a combination of whole and coarse tomatoes to give it texture. However, it is thinner, more lightly cooked than traditional "red gravy" for pasta, and not seasoned as heavily. It should not taste like a pasta or pizza sauce, especially those that are sweet. A bit of sugar is added only to offset the acidity of the tomatoes and add shine; tomato paste is never used. Chef Jerry adds a touch of basil—a Creole-Italian influence—but not so much as to overwhelm. The tomatoes and shrimp are the main attraction.

2	cups	butter, clarified, divided
4	lbs	shrimp, peeled, cleaned, and deveined (Gulf shrimp preferred)
4	cups	onions, yellow, medium diced
4	cups	bell pepper, medium diced
2	cups	celery, medium diced
1/4	cup	garlic, minced
2	tsp	salt
1/2	tsp	pepper, white
1	tsp	thyme leaves, dried
4	whole	basil leaves, fresh
2	each	bay leaves
1/8	cup	hot sauce
1/2	cup	white wine, dry
2	cups	plum tomatoes, canned whole, drained and intact (whole)
2	tsp	sugar, granulated white
6	cups	plum tomatoes, canned whole, drained and rough chopped
1	cup	green onions, diced fine (scallions)
4-6	cups	rice, cooked and held warm (serve the Shrimp Creole over it)

In a large skillet, add 1/2 cup clarified butter. Sauté the shrimp in four even batches on high heat just until lightly cooked and the color changes. Set aside. (We recommend cooking in one-pound batches so as not to overcrowd the pan and cool it down. Add more clarified butter as needed.)

Run one pound of the shrimp (1/4 of the total) through a food processor or meat grinder until coarsely puréed (not fine). It should have a lumpy texture.

In a 10-quart saucepan or Dutch oven, sauté onions, bell pepper, and celery in the rest of the butter (1/2 cup) on high heat until translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add ground shrimp and quickly sauté for 1 minute, until the shrimp are evenly mixed with the vegetables.

Add garlic, salt, pepper, thyme, basil, and bay leaves. Continue to sauté until the garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add hot sauce and continue to cook until the mixture starts to simmer, about 2 more minutes. Deglaze with white wine, scraping the bottom to loosen any dry and browned bits of flavor. Simmer until the alcohol evaporates (approximately 5 minutes).

Stir in the whole tomatoes (only) and sugar. Bring to a quick boil then reduce to simmer for 5 minutes. Lightly break tomatoes into large chunks. Add the rough chopped tomatoes and bring back up to heat. Simmer on low heat for 10-15 minutes. Add remaining whole shrimp and simmer on low for 20 minutes; do not overcook shrimp. Season to taste.

Remove from heat and serve in bowl over rice. Garnish with chopped green onion.



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