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09/25

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08/01

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UFN

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Job Opportunity

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Kitchen Diva

Don't Skimp on Shrimp

by ANGELA SHELF MEDEARIS

Shrimp is one of my favorite fresh, fast ingredients, and it's also a healthy menu choice. Shrimp are a great source of high-quality protein and are rich in health-enhancing nutrients. Shrimp also are low in fat and calories. Research shows, and dietitians concur, that the high percentage of "good fats" in shrimp reduce the impact of the cholesterol that it contains. Maybe that's why shrimp is one of America's favorite seafoods!

When and how you will prepare the shrimp should determine whether you buy it fresh or frozen. Frozen shrimp offer the longest shelf life, as they can be kept for several weeks, whereas fresh shrimp will keep only a day or two.

Fresh shrimp should have firm bodies that are still attached to their shells. They should be free of black spots on their shell, since this indicates that the flesh has begun to break down. In addition, the shells should not appear yellow or gritty, as this may indicate that sodium bisulfate or another chemical has been used to bleach the shells.

Smell is a good indicator of freshness -- good quality shrimp have a slightly saltwater smell. Since a slightly "off" smell cannot be detected through plastic, if you have the option, purchase displayed shrimp as opposed to those that are prepackaged. Once the fishmonger wraps and hands you the shrimp that you have selected, smell them through the paper wrapping and return them if they do not smell right.

After purchasing shrimp or other seafood, make sure to refrigerate it as soon as possible. If the shrimp is going to accompany you during a day full of errands, keep a cooler in the car so it stays cold and does not spoil.

The temperature of most refrigerators is slightly warmer than ideal for storing seafood. To ensure maximum freshness and quality, it is important to use special storage methods to create the optimal temperature for holding the shrimp. One of the easiest ways to do this is to place the shrimp, which has been well-wrapped, in a baking dish filled with ice. The baking dish and shrimp should then be placed on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, which is its coolest area. Replenish ice one or two times per day. Shrimp can be refrigerated for up to two days, although it should be purchased as close to being served as possible.

You can extend the shelf life of shrimp by freezing it. Wrap it well in plastic and place it in the coldest part of the freezer, where it will keep for about one month.

To defrost shrimp, place it in a bowl of cold water or in the refrigerator. Do not thaw the shrimp at room temperature or in a microwave since this can lead to a loss of moisture and nutrients.

Shrimp can be cooked either shelled or unshelled, depending how you'll be using them. There are various methods to remove the shell. One way is to first pinch off the head and the legs, and then, holding the tail, peel the shell off from the body. If shelling frozen shrimp, do not defrost them completely as they will be easier to shell when they are still slightly frozen.

Some people prefer to remove the shrimp's intestines before cooking or eating. To do so, make a shallow incision along the back of the shrimp and pull out the dark vein that runs throughout by rinsing under cold water.

This recipe for Spicy Sweet Chili Shrimp in Lettuce Cups is a perfect dish for a hot summer day!



Photo Credit: DepositPhotos

SPICY SWEET CHILI SHRIMP IN LETTUCE CUPS

1/4 cup Asian sweet chili sauce

1/4 cup mayonnaise

2 large cloves garlic, minced

2 green onions, green parts and white parts, sliced, roots discarded

2 tablespoons cilantro, minced, plus more for sprinkling

1 tablespoon lemon juice, plus more for sprinkling

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

16 jumbo shrimp (or 1 1/2 to 2 pounds medium shrimp), peeled and deveined

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon Old Bay Seasoning

4 butter lettuce or iceberg lettuce cups

1. In a large bowl, mix together the chili sauce, mayonnaise, garlic, green onions, cilantro, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Place the mixture in the refrigerator to chill.

2. Season the shrimp with the 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and the Old Bay Seasoning; mix well.

3. Heat the remaining tablespoon of olive oil in a cast-iron or non-stick skillet. Cook shrimp for 2 minutes per side. When the shrimp are almost cooked, add in the chili sauce mixture; stir to combine.

4. Sprinkle with the cilantro and lemon juice, and serve in the lettuce cups. Serves 4.

Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.

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Stickeler's Answer

Stickelers Answer

1. stripes: sprites, persist, priests, esprits
2. trainers: terrains, restrain, strainer
3. angered: enraged, grenade, derange
4. rubies: buries, bruise, busier

Stickeler's Puzzle on Page 12