

Brazilian Shrimp and Fish Stew (Moqueca)

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a bright, fresh, and filling version of this traditional Brazilian stew, we started with the seafood. Cod and shrimp made for a nice balance of flavor and texture, and both were easy to find. After tossing the seafood with garlic, salt, and pepper, we looked to the other components of the stew. To balance the richness and sweetness of the coconut milk with the bright, fresh flavor of the aromatics, we blended the onion, the tomatoes, and a portion of the cilantro in the food processor until they had the texture of a slightly chunky salsa, which added body to the stew. We kept the bell peppers diced for contrasting texture and bite. To ensure that the seafood was properly cooked, we brought the broth to a boil to make sure the pot was superhot, added the seafood and lime juice, covered the pot, and removed it from the heat, allowing the seafood to gently cook in the residual heat. To finish our moqueca, we added more cilantro and a couple of tablespoons of homemade pepper sauce, which elevated the stew with its bright, vinegary tang.

INGREDIENTS

[Print Shopping List](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6

Pepper Sauce

- 4 pickled hot cherry pepper (3 ounces)
- ½ onion, chopped coarse
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ⅛ teaspoon sugar
- Salt

Stew

- 1 pound large shrimp (26 to 30 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed
- 1 pound skinless cod fillets (¾ to 1 inch thick), cut into 1½-inch pieces

Pickled hot cherry peppers are usually sold jarred, next to the pickles or jarred roasted red peppers at the supermarket. Haddock or other firm-fleshed, flaky whitefish may be substituted for cod. We prefer untreated shrimp, but if your shrimp are treated with sodium, do not add salt to the shrimp in step 2. Our favorite coconut milk is made by Aroy-D. Serve with steamed white rice.

1. FOR THE PEPPER SAUCE: Process all ingredients in food processor until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Season with salt to taste and transfer to separate bowl. Rinse out processor bowl.

2. FOR THE STEW: Toss shrimp and cod with garlic, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in bowl. Set aside.

3. Process onion, tomatoes and their juice, and ¼ cup cilantro in food processor until finely chopped and mixture has texture of pureed salsa, about 30 seconds.

- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 1 onion, chopped coarse
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
- ¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons lime juice

4. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add red and green bell peppers and ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add onion-tomato mixture and ½ teaspoon salt. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until puree has reduced and thickened slightly, 3 to 5 minutes (pot should not be dry).

5. Increase heat to high, stir in coconut milk, and bring to boil (mixture should be bubbling across entire surface). Add seafood mixture and lime juice and stir to evenly distribute seafood, making sure all pieces are submerged in liquid. Cover pot and remove from heat. Let stand until shrimp and cod are opaque and just cooked through, 15 minutes.

6. Gently stir in 2 tablespoons pepper sauce and remaining ½ cup cilantro, being careful not to break up cod too much. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve, passing remaining pepper sauce separately.