Spicy salt and pepper shrimp make an excellent appetizer or main course. The deep-fried shrimp shells turn a wonderful orange color, while the spicy seasoning adds extra flavor. Leaving the shells on protects the shrimp meat inside, so it tastes very tender.

Although this is a Cantonese dish, it is sometimes made with Szechuan salt and pepper mix—feel free to use this instead of the sea salt and ground pepper in the recipe if desired. (Use 1 1/2 to 2 teaspoons.)

Ingredients

* 1 pound medium shrimp (about 25 shrimp), heads removed, deveined, but not shelled
* 2 to 3 tablespoons tapioca starch or cornstarch, as needed
* 1 teaspoon sea salt or kosher salt
* 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black, white, or [Szechuan peppercorns](https://www.thespruceeats.com/buying-sichuan-peppercorns-695231)
* 4 cups oil for deep-frying

Steps to Make It

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1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Soak the shrimp in warm, lightly salted water for 5 minutes.
3. Rinse in cold water, drain and pat dry with paper towels.
4. Lightly coat the shrimp with the tapioca starch or cornstarch.
5. In a small bowl, mix the salt with the freshly ground peppercorns and set aside.
6. Heat the oil to 360 F in a deep fat fryer, heavy saucepan with deep sides, or a second wok (it is easiest not to deep-fry and stir-fry the shrimp in the same ​wok). Carefully add the shrimp to the hot oil, 4 to 5 at a time, and deep-fry until they turn bright orange (about 40 seconds). Make sure the temperature does not fall below 350 F.
7. Carefully remove the shrimp with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Continue deep-frying the remainder of the shrimp.
8. Heat a [wok](https://www.thespruceeats.com/best-woks-to-buy-4140289) over medium heat. Add the salt and pepper mixture and the deep-fried shrimp. Stir-fry briefly to coat the shrimp in the mixture (20 to 30 seconds).
9. Serve hot and enjoy!