



Shrimp Scampi

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Our shrimp scampi recipe uses a few test kitchen tricks to ensure flavorful and well-cooked shrimp along with a cohesive, garlicky wine-and-butter sauce. First, we brine the shrimp in salt and sugar to season them throughout and keep them moist and juicy. Then we poach them in wine rather than sauté them, so they cook evenly and gently. To get good seafood flavor into the sauce, we make a stock from the shrimp shells. And for potent garlic flavor, we use a generous amount of sliced garlic—too much minced garlic made the sauce grainy. Finally, to keep the sauce silky and emulsified, we added a teaspoon of cornstarch. Emulsifying with cornstarch means that we can use a little less butter, so the sauce isn't overly rich.

Serves 4

Extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound) can be substituted for jumbo shrimp. If you use them, reduce the cooking time in step 3 by 1 to 2 minutes. We prefer untreated shrimp, but if your shrimp are treated with sodium or preservatives like sodium tripolyphosphate, skip the brining in step 1 and add 1/4 teaspoon of salt to the sauce in step 4. Serve with crusty bread.

INGREDIENTS

- 3** tablespoons salt
- 2** tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2** pounds shell-on jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed, shells reserved
- 2** tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1** cup dry white wine
- 4** sprigs fresh thyme
- 3** tablespoons lemon juice, plus lemon wedges for serving
- 1** teaspoon cornstarch
- 8** garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 1/2** teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4** teaspoon pepper
- 4** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1** tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Dissolve salt and sugar in 1 quart cold water in large container. Submerge shrimp in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Remove shrimp from brine and pat dry with paper towels.
- 2.** Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until shimmering. Add shrimp shells and cook, stirring frequently, until they begin to turn spotty brown and skillet starts to brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and carefully add wine and thyme sprigs. When bubbling subsides, return skillet to medium heat and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Strain mixture through colander set over large bowl. Discard shells and reserve liquid (you should have about 2/3 cup). Wipe out skillet with paper towels.
- 3.** Combine lemon juice and cornstarch in small bowl. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, pepper flakes, and pepper in now-empty

skillet over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until garlic is fragrant and just beginning to brown at edges, 3 to 5 minutes. Add reserved wine mixture, increase heat to high, and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium, add shrimp, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until shrimp are just opaque, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and, using slotted spoon, transfer shrimp to bowl.

4. Return skillet to medium heat, add lemon juice–cornstarch mixture, and cook until slightly thickened, 1 minute. Remove from heat and whisk in butter and parsley until combined. Return shrimp and any accumulated juices to skillet and toss to combine. Serve, passing lemon wedges separately.

TECHNIQUE

THE RIGHT SHRIMP

Many manufacturers add salt or sodium tripolyphosphate to shrimp to prevent darkening or water loss, but we found that these treatments made the shellfish watery and bland; the latter also produced a chemical taste. When buying frozen shrimp, look for a brand with “shrimp” as the only ingredient listed on the bag. Some supermarkets, such as Whole Foods, sell only untreated shrimp.

TECHNIQUE

HOW TO PEEL AND DEVEIN SHRIMP

Many supermarkets carry easy-peel shrimp. The shells have been split open along the back for easy removal and the shrimp have already been deveined. If you can't find them, here is how to do the job yourself.

1. Peel shell away from flesh, starting at swimming legs, and then gently pull meat from tail.

2. Make 1/4-inch-long incision along back of shrimp, then use tip of paring knife to remove vein.

