



Garlicky Roasted Shrimp with Parsley and Anise

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 14: At the Seafood Counter

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

To keep our roasted shrimp plump and moist, we brined them briefly. To further protect them as they cooked and to produce a more roasted flavor, we left their shells on. The shells browned quickly in the heat of the oven and transferred flavor to the shrimp itself. To get tons of flavor onto the shrimp, we tossed them in a potent mixture of aromatic spices and herbs.

Serves 4 to 6

Don't be tempted to use smaller shrimp with this cooking technique; they will be overseasoned and prone to overcook.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4** cup salt
- 2** pounds shell-on jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound)
- 4** tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4** cup vegetable oil
- 6** garlic cloves, minced
- 1** teaspoon anise seeds
- 1/2** teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4** teaspoon pepper
- 2** tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- Lemon wedges

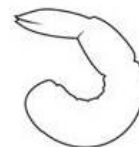
INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Dissolve salt in 1 quart cold water in large container. Using kitchen shears or sharp paring knife, cut through shell of shrimp and devein but do not remove shell. Using paring knife, continue to cut shrimp 1/2 inch deep, taking care not to cut in half completely. Submerge shrimp in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 15 minutes.
 - 2.** Adjust oven rack 4 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Combine melted butter, oil, garlic, anise seeds, pepper flakes, and pepper in large bowl. Remove shrimp from brine and pat dry with paper towels. Add shrimp and parsley to butter mixture; toss well, making sure butter mixture gets into interior of shrimp. Arrange shrimp in single layer on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet.
 - 3.** Broil shrimp until opaque and shells are beginning to brown, 2 to 4 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through broiling. Flip shrimp and continue to broil until second side is opaque and shells are beginning to brown, 2 to 4 minutes longer, rotating sheet halfway through broiling. Transfer shrimp to serving platter and serve immediately, passing lemon wedges separately.
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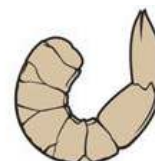
TECHNIQUE

KEYS TO SHRIMP THAT BROWN DEEPLY—BUT DON'T DRY OUT

USE JUMBOS: Bigger shrimp are less likely to dry out in the heat. Plus, there are fewer pieces to crowd the baking sheet and thwart browning.



LEAVE SHELLS ON: Cooking the shrimp shell-on helps protect their lean, delicate flesh from dehydrating before the exterior develops good browning.



BRINE BRIEFLY: Plumping up the shrimp with a quick saltwater soak further buffers them from the oven's heat and also seasons them throughout.



BROIL ON RACK: Broiling the shrimp on a wire rack set in a baking sheet allows the hot air to circulate around them for deep, even color.



TECHNIQUE

THE SURPRISING POWER OF SHRIMP SHELLS

We found that cooking shrimp in their shells kept them juicier, but our shell-on roasted shrimp boast such savory depth that we wondered if there wasn't more to this outer layer than we thought. Our science editor confirmed our suspicions. First, shrimp shells contain water-soluble flavor compounds that will get absorbed by the shrimp flesh during cooking. Second, the shells are loaded with proteins and sugars—almost as much as the flesh itself. When they brown, they undergo the flavor-enhancing Maillard reaction just as roasted meats do, which gives the shells even more flavor to pass along to the flesh. Third, like the flesh, the shells contain healthy amounts of glutamates and nucleotides, compounds that dramatically enhance savory umami flavor when present together in food. These compounds also get transferred to the meat during cooking, amplifying the effect of its own glutamates and nucleotides. Bottom line: Shrimp shells not only protect the meat during cooking but also significantly enhance its flavor. This also proves that those of us who enjoy eating the roasted shell along with the meat are onto something.

TECHNIQUE

BUTTERFLYING SHELL-ON SHRIMP

Starting at head of shrimp, snip through back of shell with kitchen shears. (This can also be done with very sharp paring knife: Cut from tail end of shell toward head.) Devein shrimp but do not remove shell.



Using paring knife, carefully continue to cut ½-inch slit in shrimp, making sure not to split it in half completely.

