

Edna Lewis & Scott Peacock's Shrimp Grits

By Genius Recipes

Like many of the recipes in [The Gift of Southern Cooking](#), this recipe is a little bit Scott Peacock and a little bit Edna Lewis. Stirred through the creamy grits, the shrimp paste goes further than a few pretty prawns piled on top ever could, pervading every spoonful with the pure essence of shrimp at its best and most seductive. The shrimp paste also makes a lovely spread for crackers and all-purpose flavor enhancer (just imagine stirring it into risotto, saucing fish, or filling tea sandwiches with it).

Serves 6 For the shrimp paste:

- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter
 - 1 pound fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined (Scott Peacock likes small, sweet ones like gulf shrimp, but get whatever is freshest)
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 1/4 cup sherry
 - 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
 - 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1. Heat 6 tablespoons of the butter in a large skillet until it is hot and foaming. Add the shrimp, salt, and pepper, and cook over high heat, stirring often, for 4-7 minutes, until the shrimp are pink and just cooked through.
 2. Remove the skillet from the stove and use a slotted spoon or tongs to transfer the cooked shrimp to the bowl of a food processor with the blade attachment.
 3. Return the skillet to the stove, and add the sherry, lemon juice, and cayenne pepper. Cook over high heat until the liquid in the skillet is reduced to approximately 3 tablespoons and is quite syrupy. Immediately add this to the shrimp in the food processor, and process until the shrimp are thoroughly pureed.
 4. With the motor running, add the remaining butter in pieces and process until thoroughly blended. Turn the food processor off and carefully taste the paste for seasoning, adding more salt, black pepper, sherry, lemon juice, or cayenne pepper as needed. Transfer the shrimp paste to a ceramic crock and allow to cool completely.
 5. If not using right away, cover the shrimp paste and refrigerate for up to 1 week. Refrigerated shrimp paste should be allowed to return to room temperature before serving. If it is still too dry to spread, you may work in some softened butter and salt to taste until it is spreadable.

For the shrimp grits:

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups milk, or more
- 1 cup stone-ground or regular grits
- 1/4 cup heavy cream

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 - Kosher salt
1. Heat water and milk in a heavy-bottomed saucepan until just simmering.
 2. While the milk and water are heating, put the grits in a large mixing bowl and cover with cool water. (If you are using regular grits, skip this step.) Stir the grits assertively so that the chaff floats to the top. Carefully skim the surface of the grits to remove the chaff. Drain the grits through a fine strainer, and stir them into the simmering water and milk. Cook, stirring often, until the grits are tender to the bite and have thickened to the consistency of thick oatmeal. Regular grits are done in about 20 minutes, but stone-ground grits require an hour or a little more to cook, and you will have to add additional milk and water as needed. As the grits thicken, stir them more often to keep them from sticking and scorching.
 3. Stir in the cream and butter and season generously with salt to taste. Remove from heat and let rest, covered, until time to serve. If the grits become too thick as they cool, reheat them, stirring in a little extra water or milk to thin.
 4. Top hot grits with a generous dollop of Shrimp Paste. Scott Peacock likes to stir it in thoroughly, then let it rest for 5-10 minutes for the flavors to get to know each other. For every cup of grits, stir in about 1/4 cup or more Shrimp Paste, and sprinkle some chopped fresh chives on top, if you like them. Serve as an appetizer, a supper dish with buttered toast, or a savory side dish.