



Culinary Craftwork

Newsletter: July 2011

My Favorite Crustacean: The Succulent Shrimp

Introduction

This issue of the newsletter celebrates my favorite crustacean, the shrimp, and features four delicious recipes: **Shrimp Ceviche (Page 4)**; **New Orleans Style "BBQ" Shrimp (Page 6)**; **Spicy Indian Shrimp Patia (Page 9)**; and **Stir-fried Shrimp with Ginger, Scallions & Cilantro (Page 11)**.

Culinary Craftwork is my business, which specializes in offering private and group cooking classes, as well as personal chef services and small-scale catering. The Culinary Craftwork experience is different in that the classes I offer are fully customizable to what you want. I teach the classes in your own home at a time that is convenient for you. And I do all the shopping.

It is my mission to give you the tools you need to prepare meals that will seduce you with savor and wow your guests.

My website contains many sample menus that focus on building different skills, but I am happy to partner with you and come up with something just for you. The classes are fun, informal, and informative—and you get to eat!

The Culinary Craftwork newsletter is a bi-monthly publication that focuses on seasonal fare with recipes and pictures. My newsletter also includes a section called "Ask the Chef," so please don't be shy—email me with your questions.

Look for the next newsletter in September. I invite you to view my previous [newsletters](#) and [recipes](#).

[Visit My Facebook Fan Page](#)



Professional In-home Cooking Classes

Culinary Craftwork offers professionally taught in-home cooking classes by a chef with over 20 years' experience in restaurants and catering.

The classes are designed to build basic skills and boost confidence in the kitchen. I teach the classes in your own home, offer themed menus, cooking class parties and catered dinner parties.

Full class descriptions and prices are available on my website.

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Shrimp and Prawns

While very similar in appearance and flavor, shrimp and prawns are actually two different animals.

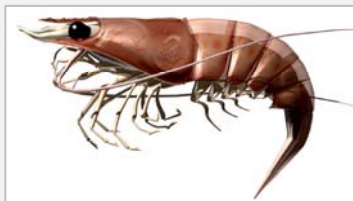
The terms "prawn" and "shrimp" are often used interchangeably and it depends on where you live, as to which term is used.

In some parts of the U.S. the term "shrimp" is used to describe the typical salt-water crustacean that most of us are familiar with, while "prawn" is reserved to describe the fresh-water varieties. Prawns may be found in both fresh and salt water.

Additionally, the two terms are often used to denote size, with "shrimp" being smaller and "prawns" being larger.



Black striped tiger shrimp



Hard-shelled prawn



I've always loved seafood, and shrimp in particular: little nuggets of briny-sweet goodness. I like them boiled and chilled, sautéed, baked, and grilled. The best shrimp I've ever had were fresh Gulf shrimp in New Orleans; unfortunately fresh shrimp are hard to come by and highly perishable, so most shrimp (both farmed and wild) are processed and frozen. Frozen shrimp have their merits—they are convenient and typically fresh tasting, if not as sweet and flavorful as fresh. A lot of that fresh, sweet flavor, however, is a result of proper handling. Mishandled shrimp develop iodine and ammoniac flavors quickly when refrigerated without ice or thawed and bagged. Frozen shrimp should be thawed slowly in the refrigerator.

For years, my husband would not eat anything that "swims or walks sideways." I'm happy to report that his attitude has undergone a complete metamorphosis in the past couple of years. Apparently it is possible to teach an old dog new tricks! I like to think that I am a good influence on him.

Shrimp are high in protein and low in fat. In fact, a 4-oz. portion of shrimp contains almost half the recommended daily protein needed but only contains 112 calories and less than 1g of fat. Granted, a 4-oz. portion is a bit on the small side.... I, personally, like to allow at least 6 oz. per person, which is why the recipes I have included in this newsletter offer approximate yields.

Shrimp and prawns also contain a lot of omega-3 fatty acids, but these fatty acids are good for you and help prevent against heart disease, circulatory diseases and many other types of illnesses. Additionally, prawns and shrimp contain high levels of vitamin B12, zinc, iodine, phosphorous, potassium, selenium and iron and have smaller quantities of calcium, magnesium and sodium.

There are over 300 different species of prawns and shrimp, which are found in most waters all over the world, including both salt and fresh water. The terms "prawn" and "shrimp" are often used interchangeably and it depends on where you live, as to which term is used. In the U.S. the term "shrimp" is used frequently to describe the typical salt-water crustacean that most of us are familiar with, while "prawn" is reserved to describe the fresh water varieties.

In the U.K. most shrimp are called "prawns." Additionally, the two terms are often used to denote size, with "shrimp" being smaller and "prawns" being larger. It can be quite confusing, as well as inaccurate, because shrimp and prawns are actually two different

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Prawns and shrimp belong to the same family as crabs and lobsters and are similar in a number of ways. They are decapod crustaceans, which means that they have 10 legs and a shell covering their body, although the shell that covers prawns and shrimp is much thinner and not as hard as the shell of most other crustaceans. One of the main differences between prawns and shrimp (and their relatives, the crabs and lobsters) is that prawns and shrimp primarily swim freely, whereas crabs and lobsters crawl about on the sea floor.

As with crabs and lobsters, shrimps and prawns must shed their shells in order to grow bigger. Interestingly, prawns and shrimp start their 4-year existence as males and then change into females for their final year of life. Increasingly, both domestic and imported shrimp rely on aqua culture, or farms. Consequently, shrimp are supremely sustainable.

When buying fresh prawns or shrimp look for the following signs before making your choice:

- The shells should be firm and glossy and not broken or slimy.
- There should be no discoloration of the heads or the shells, as this is an indication that the meat is starting to go bad.
- They should smell fresh and briny—avoid if there is any hint of ammonia.
- The eyes should be prominent and shiny and not shrunken inwards or missing.

If you are buying raw prawns or shrimps, do not be put off if they are translucent or a different color than the typical pink prawn. All prawns and shrimp only turn pink once they have been cooked. For more information about prawns and shrimp, click here:

www.helpwithcooking.com.

Changing the subject (but only slightly)—

My husband and I just got back from vacationing in Cabo San Lucas, where we had the opportunity to taste many local specialties, particularly shrimp dishes, at various restaurants. On our first night we enjoyed shrimp in guajillo chile oil at [El Comal](#), a tropical garden restaurant tucked away in the heart of San Jose del Cabo's old town. Later in the week we sampled tangy shrimp with tamarind sauce at [Hacienda Cocina Y Cantina](#), a beautiful spot just off Medano Beach with great views of the water and delicious food.

But our favorite shrimp joint was [Maro's Shrimp House](#) on Av. Manuel Hidalgo. The simply grilled, butterflied shrimp with garlic butter, prepared under the watchful eye of Maro himself, were outstanding. Sublimely fresh and tender, the shrimp are sold by the kilo (or half kilo); we had no trouble eating them all. Little more than a whole in the wall, the restaurant is open-air to the street; we actually made two trips there, it was that good.



About Shrimp Sizes

Shrimp Per Pound Chart	
Shrimp Size	Number
Extra Colossal	U/10
Colossal	U/12
Colossal	U/15
Extra Jumbo	16/20
Jumbo	21/25
Extra Large	26/30
Large	31/35
Medium Large	36/40
Medium	41/50
Small	51/60
Extra Small	61/70

Shrimp are typically sold by count per pound, as shown in the chart above. The "U" in U/10 stands for "under," as in under 10 shrimp per pound.

Maro's Shrimp House



Sublimely fresh and tender, Maro's grilled, butterflied shrimp are sold by the kilo. If you are a shrimp lover, they just don't get any better than this!

[See what others have to say about Maro's Shrimp House on TripAdvisor.com.](#)

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Fresh lime juice is essential.



Persian Limes



Mexican Key Limes

Persian limes are the limes you typically find at the grocery. Though they vary in size, they are substantially larger than Mexican Key limes.

Mexican Key limes are green and yellow in color. Small and juicy, their flavor is more acidic than Persian limes.

You can use Persian limes or Mexican Key limes for ceviche, but be sure to use fresh squeezed lime juice; avoid lime juice from concentrate.

Shrimp Ceviche



Ceviche is a seafood salad that is commonly found throughout Latin America and is made with raw fish or shrimp that have been cured with lime juice. It is essential to use fresh lime juice rather than lime juice from concentrate. There are many variations of ceviche. How long the shrimp takes to cure depends on the size of the shrimp and how it's cut. You'll need to allow ample time in the refrigerator for them to cure; however, it is possible to speed up the process by using just-barely-cooked shrimp (which is typically what I do) and immersing them in the lime juice for one hour.

Shrimp Ceviche

Serves 8 as an appetizer

Ingredients

- 1 lb. medium-small shrimp
- 1 cup fresh lime juice
- 2 Roma (plum) tomatoes, diced
- ¼ cup red or white onion, chopped
- ½ cup diced cucumber
- 1 serrano chile, seeded & minced
- 1-2 Tbs. cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp. hot pepper sauce
- 1 ½ tsp. ketchup
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- Salt & freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 avocado, diced

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

Continued on page 5

Shrimp Ceviche (Cont.)

Directions

Cooking and Marinating the Shrimp

1. Bring 1 quart salted water to a boil and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the lime juice. Add in the shrimp, cover and let the water return to the boil. Immediately remove from the heat, set the lid askew and pour off all the liquid. Replace the cover and let the shrimp steam off the heat for 10 minutes.
2. Spread out the shrimp in a large glass or stainless steel bowl to cool completely. Peel and devein the shrimp: One by one lay the shrimp on your work surface, make a shallow incision down the back and scrape out the (usually) dark intestinal tract. Cut the shrimp into two or three pieces. Toss the shrimp with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lime juice, cover and refrigerate for about an hour.
3. In a small strainer, rinse the onion under cold water, then shake off the excess liquid. Add to the shrimp bowl along with the cilantro, ketchup, hot sauce, olive oil, cucumber, tomatoes, chile. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate briefly.

Serving the ceviche

Spoon the ceviche into sundae glasses, martini glasses, or small bowls: garnish with diced avocado, sprigs of cilantro and slices of lime.

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

Dice the avocado in its shell.



It is easy to dice an avocado in its shell. Simply halve and pit the avocado; then use a paring knife to cut a cross-hatch pattern through the flesh (but not through the skin). Use a large spoon to excise the diced avocado.

Cajun Seasoning



I highly recommend that you make your own Cajun seasoning blend for this recipe, but Chef Paul Prudhomme's Seafood Magic is a decent substitute.

Directions for making your own Cajun seasoning blend are on the following page.

New Orleans Style "BBQ" Shrimp



I first tasted this dish at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in New Orleans, where it was made with incredibly fresh Gulf shrimp. They were, by far, the tastiest shrimp I have ever encountered. Each restaurant in New Orleans has its own version of "BBQ" shrimp, but they have one thing in common: the shrimp are cooked in some form of liquid and are not barbecued on a grill. Why the name "BBQ?" It's a mystery to me.

Suffice it to say that the shrimp in the following recipe are poached in a peppery, buttery broth with Cajun seasoning—maybe not the most heart healthy dish, but a definite winner. It's worth the trouble to make your own Cajun spice blend, but Paul Prudhomme's Seafood Magic works well too. The recipe is not super spicy, so if you like your food hot, you can increase the amount of pepper and Cajun seasoning.

New Orleans Style "BBQ" Shrimp

Serves 2-4

Ingredients

- 1 lb. medium-large shrimp, shelled and deveined
- ¾ stick unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. Cajun seasoning (see below) or Seafood Magic
- 4 oz. beer
- 1 tsp. Lea & Perrin's Worcestershire sauce
- 4 oz. seafood stock or bottled clam juice
- 1 Tbs. chopped parsley

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

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New Orleans Style “BBQ” Shrimp (Cont.)

Cajun Seasoning: (combine well in a coffee grinder)

- ½ tsp. white pepper
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- 2 ½ tsp. cayenne
- 1 Tbs. paprika
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. ground thyme
- ½ tsp. dry mustard
- ¼ tsp. ground oregano
- ¼ tsp. basil
- 1 tsp. salt

Directions

1. Melt ¼ stick of butter in a skillet; add the seasoning mix and black pepper.
2. Add the seafood stock or clam juice, Worcestershire sauce and beer. Bring to a boil. Add the shrimp and cook until pink. Remove the shrimp to a bowl (or individual serving bowls).
3. Reduce the sauce by about half, sprinkle in the chopped parsley, and pour over the shrimp. Serve immediately with steamed rice and/or garlic bread.

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co.

San Francisco, Pier 39



Bubba Gump’s is an international chain restaurant, which while very “touristy” can also be quite good. We enjoy driving down to Monterey, where the restaurant is located on Fisherman’s Wharf. There is also a Bubba Gump’s on Pier 39 at San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf.

Try the Cajun shrimp in a cast iron pan or steamed shrimp in a bucket—and be sure to order some garlic bread to mop up the buttery broth.

For best results cooking rice, use an electric rice cooker.



There are two types of rice cookers: one type simply has an On/Off switch and steams the rice according to time. The fancier rice cookers (such as the one pictured above) use “fuzzy logic” to cook the rice. They begin by soaking the rice for a fixed time, then bring the steamer up to temperature and cook the rice till it’s done, after which the machine goes into a “keep warm” mode.

Spicy Indian Shrimp Patia



This authentic Indian shrimp curry is rich and chock full of spice without being searingly hot, despite having 5 green chiles as well as cayenne. The success of the dish relies on proper caramelization of the onions as a first step, which takes about 20 minutes resulting in a sweet, tender base for the spices. From that point on, the recipe is very quick to prepare. In fact, the curry sauce can be made ahead with the shrimp added five minutes before serving. I’m a total curry hound, and this is one of my favorite recipes. It is not especially photogenic, but it is very delicious!

Spicy Indian Shrimp Patia

Serves 3-4

Ingredients

- 1 lb. shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 1 Tbs. tamarind concentrate, + ½ cup of water
- 5 green chiles, seeded and chopped
- 3 plump cloves garlic
- ½ tsp. cumin seeds
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- ½ tsp. cumin powder
- ¾ tsp. coriander powder
- ¼ tsp. cayenne powder
- 1 tsp. garam masala powder
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. light brown sugar
- 10 curry leaves
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

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Spicy Indian Shrimp Patia (Cont.)

Directions

1. In a spice grinder or food processor, grind the cumin seeds, green chiles and garlic to a paste. You may need to add a teaspoon of water to help it blend.
2. Heat ¼ cup of oil in a deep, preferably non-stick, skillet over high heat. When hot, add the chopped onions and fry them, stirring frequently, till caramelized and brown. Towards the end of the cooking process, you will need to stir them constantly. Add the chile-garlic paste and fry for two minutes, stirring well.
3. Add the cumin, coriander, cayenne, turmeric and garam masala. Stir constantly for one minute. Add the chopped tomatoes and fry for 4-5 minutes, stirring from time to time.
4. Add the tamarind and water, the brown sugar, curry leaves, and cilantro, along with 1 ½ tsp. salt. Simmer for 5 minutes. Now add the shrimp and cook till just done. The gravy will be thick and cling to the shrimp. If it is too thick for your liking, you can add a bit more water. Serve the curry with rice.

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

Indian Ingredients



Tamarind Concentrate

Tamarind is a sticky fruit in a pod, which adds a sour flavor to the dish. You can get tamarind in blocks and soak it in warm water, then strain out the pits, or you can use bottled tamarind concentrate (which is what I do).



Curry Leaves

Curry leaves have a unique flavor that is impossible to describe; they add a depth of flavor to many Indian dishes and can be used fresh or dried and ground in a spice masala.

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Fenugreek Greens



Fenugreek greens, also known as “methi” in Indian groceries, add a bright, bitter flavor, much like watercress.

Stir-fried Shrimp with Ginger, Scallions & Cilantro



This is a bright, fresh dish with an unusual element—fresh fenugreek greens (also known as methi). The greens are bitter like watercress and can be found easily in Indian or Asian groceries. The combination of green herbs and bright yellow turmeric is as eye-appealing and tasty as it is healthy to eat; it is packed with nutrients and antioxidants. As with most stir-fried dishes, the recipe can be prepared in minutes once the prep is done.

Stir-fried Shrimp with Ginger, Scallions & Cilantro

Serves 3-4

Ingredients

- 1 lb. shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil
- ¼ x ½ inch piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 2 green chiles, finely chopped
- 1 cup chopped scallions (green and white parts)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ tsp. turmeric powder
- ¼ tsp. red chile powder
- ¼ cup chopped scallion greens
- 2 Tbs. chopped fenugreek greens (or watercress)
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1-2 Tbs. lemon or lime juice

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

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Stir-fried Shrimp with Ginger, Scallions & Cilantro (Cont.)

Directions

1. Soak the fenugreek greens in a bowl of water with ¼ tsp of salt. Let soak for at least 15 minutes.
2. In a deep skillet or wok, heat the oil, and when hot, add 1 cup chopped scallions, chiles, garlic and ginger. Sauté on medium heat for 4-5 minutes, or until the scallions are tender and translucent. Add the turmeric powder, red chile powder, and 1 Tbs. of water and cook for another minute.
3. Add the cilantro, scallion greens, and fenugreek and ½ tsp. salt. Stir-fry for 1-2 minutes.
4. Add the shrimp and ½ cup of water. Sauté until the shrimp are cooked and the liquid has reduced. Taste to check seasoning and add lemon or lime juice, as desired.

[Printer-Friendly Version of this Recipe](#)

Use a nonstick stir-fry pan or wok for best results.



The pan above is the Anolon Advanced Ultimate 12-inch Stir-Fry. It is one of my favorite pans, and I use it on a near daily basis.

In addition to excelling in stir-fry performance, it is the perfect pan for making curries, such as the Shrimp Patia recipe in this newsletter.

Ask the Chef



I love hearing from people who have read the newsletter or taken one of my classes.

I enjoy the opportunity to answer your questions in this general forum, and I hope that my advice is helpful.

Please continue to send me your questions, comments and ideas. They really make my day.

And don't forget—you can post your questions on the Culinary Craftwork

[Facebook fan page.](#)

Thank you!
Alyssa

Ask the Chef (Q&A)

Buying cookware

Brenda asks, "I have a limited budget and buying cookware can be very expensive. Is it worth spending the extra money?"

Reply: In general, when it comes to cookware, you get what you pay for, but there are many moderately priced brands. Look for heavy-bottomed pots and pans. Aluminum is an excellent heat conductor, but seek out black anodized aluminum or stainless steel clad pans, as uncoated aluminum can interact with certain foods and acids, which will affect color and flavor. When purchasing non-stick pans, seek out those with a sturdy coating, such as Calphalon One or Anolon Advanced, that are rated to a high temperature of 400 degrees; avoid light, Teflon coated pans, as the coating eventually peels off. And never use aerosol oil spray as it creates a sticky residue that will eventually ruin the pan's non-stick coating.

Softening solidified brown sugar

Eileen asks, "Can hardened brown sugar be softened again?"

Reply: There are a number of ways to reconstitute hardened brown sugar. Place the brown sugar chunk in a microwave-safe plastic bag. Take a square of paper towel and moisten with water (not dripping wet—wring out excess). Place the wet paper towel in the bag with the sugar and seal. Place in the microwave for approximately 20 seconds. If still not soft, microwave for a few seconds more, repeating until the sugar is ready to use. Be careful not to melt the sugar. I like to store brown sugar in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. Generally there is enough humidity in the refrigerator to keep the sugar from hardening.

Using baking powder and baking soda

Carol asks, "I like to make quick breads and have noticed that some recipes call for baking powder while others call for baking soda (or both). Why is that?"

Reply: Baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) is used when there is an acid such as buttermilk, sour milk or lemon juice in the batter. Carbon dioxide bubbles are generated whenever a wet acid and alkali are combined, which creates a leavening effect. Baking powder, on the other hand, contains both acid and alkali components. Double-acting baking powder contains two acids (calcium acid phosphate and sodium aluminum sulfate) as well as baking soda. There are other types of baking powder sold, but double-acting powder is most common and reliable. It does not keep indefinitely, however. You should purchase new baking powder every six months or so to ensure that your baked goods will rise properly.

Choosing a ripe pineapple

Janine asks, "I love fresh pineapple, but I'm never sure when it's ripe. How can you tell?"

Reply: Fresh, ripe pineapples are highly perishable, so they are often picked semi-ripe or green. There are several methods of testing for ripeness. Choosing a pineapple based on golden skin color can be a mistake, as different varieties of pineapple have different colors. One of the most reliable methods for choosing a pineapple is to use your nose; the aroma should be sweet. Another method is to remove one of the small spiky crown leaves at the center of the pineapple top—if it pulls out easily, most likely the pineapple is ripe, but some people reject this test saying that all center leaves pull out easily. You can place an underripe pineapple in a pierced paper bag and let it rest for a couple of days at room temperature.