

#110: Jazzy Shrimp

Andouille Spiced Gulf Shrimp

Meg Bickford, Commander's Palace

8 ounces andouille sausage
5 cobs of whole corn, with the husks
1 small onion
3 ribs celery
1 small green bell pepper
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons Creole seasoning
2 cups fresh or dried red beans
1 quart chicken or vegetable stock
4 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
20 (10-15 size) Louisiana wild white shrimp, peeled and deveined
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped, divided
3 tablespoons Andouille Spice Blend (recipe follows)
4 ounces brandy, divided
½ bunch parsley, chopped
3 sprigs of thyme, picked and chopped
Coarse kosher salt
Black pepper
1 cup cooked Louisiana popcorn rice (recipe follows)
Smoked Tomato Beurre Blanc (recipe follows)

Preheat oven to 350. Small dice the andouille sausage and spread it on a baking sheet. Render in the preheated oven for about 7 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Place whole corn in the oven to roast in the husk for about 15 minutes. Allow corn to cool before peeling away the husk. Cut the kernels from cobb and set aside. Discard husk and cobb.

Preheat a grill to a medium-high heat. Place a perforated pan on the grill to get hot while preparing the vegetables. Small dice the onion, celery and bell pepper

and place in a mixing bowl. Sprinkle lightly with 1 teaspoon of salad oil (too much oil will result in flaming on the grill and leave your product tasting of burnt oil) and Creole seasoning. Toss vigorously to coat the vegetables evenly. Pour contents of bowl onto the perforated grill sheet and stir continuously until the vegetables start to caramelize and become a little translucent. Remove from the grill and set aside.

Blanch the fresh or dried red beans in seasoned chicken or vegetable stock until they are fork tender. Even fresh beans can take a while to cook so give this about 20 minutes, checking the beans often. Note: Fresh red beans can be hard to come by but are highly recommended when you can get your hands on them.

Heat a large cast iron pan over high heat with 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil. In a mixing bowl, toss the shrimp with Andouille Spice Blend, half of the chopped garlic and 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil. Arrange shrimp in the hot pan so they lay flat and are not overlapping each other to ensure the shrimp get a nice even sear. Sear the shrimp on both sides, deglazing the pan with 2 ounces of the brandy after you flip them. Allow the shrimp to cook for a few minutes until the flesh inside is white.

Heat a large cast iron pan over high heat with the remaining tablespoon of vegetable oil. Add the rest of the garlic, stirring quickly to toast it, but being careful not to burn. Add the diced, rendered andouille and grilled vegetables to the pan and sauté for a minute just to warm the ingredients through. Reduce heat to medium-high, then add the roasted corn and red beans to the pan. Season with salt and black pepper. When the ingredients are hot, deglaze the pan with the remaining 2 ounces of brandy, allowing the brandy to flame and reduce. Add 1 cup cooked Louisiana popcorn rice and stir to incorporate. Finish with a spoon or two of Smoked Tomato Beurre Blanc to moisten the ingredients, then add chopped parsley, thyme, and salt and pepper to taste.

On entrée plates, spoon a line of the red bean and rice mixture across the plate, then arrange 5 shrimp on top of the red beans. Spoon Smoked Tomato Beurre Blanc over the shrimp and around the plate.

Makes 4 servings.

Andouille Spice Blend

4 ounces salt
1 1/2 ounces black pepper
1/4 ounce cayenne
1 ounce paprika
1/4 ounce chili powder
1/4 ounce crushed red pepper
1/8 ounce curing salt
1/4 ounce file
1/4 ounce cumin

Mix all the ingredients together. Pour into a container with a tight lid and store in a cool, dry place.

Makes 8 ounces of seasoning.

Louisiana Popcorn Rice

3 tablespoons butter, divided
½ small onion
1 cup Louisiana popcorn rice
1 bay leaf
1¼ cups water
Salt
Black pepper

In a small sauce pot over medium heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Add the onion to the pan and cook until translucent. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and when melted, add the rice. Stir the rice constantly to protect it from getting “too toasted” on the bottom of the pot. When the rice becomes whiter and slightly opaque, season it with salt and pepper and add the water. As soon as the water bubbles, turn the pot off and quickly cover it with plastic wrap or a tight-fitting lid. Let the pot sit for about 20-25 minutes to steam the rice. Note: I use Louisiana popcorn rice in this recipe because I like the texture of the rice and I think it holds everything together well. The smell is also incredible.

Smoked Tomato Beurre Blanc

4 Creole tomatoes
1 cup dry white wine
4 sprigs thyme
2 white peppercorns
1 lemon, peeled and pith removed
1 cup cream
4 tablespoons butter
Sugarcane vinegar

Preheat a grill to medium-high heat. Cut tomatoes in half horizontally and season generously with salt and pepper. Grill the tomatoes cut side down until charred, then flip and repeat. Place the grilled tomatoes in a blender.

In a small sauce pot over low heat, combine the wine, thyme, peppercorns and lemon. Reduce the mixture until almost the wine is almost evaporated. Add the heavy cream and simmer until it has reduced by approximately one third.

Pour the reduction through a sieve into the blender over the tomatoes. Puree until the sauce is smooth, being careful since the sauce will be hot. Add bits of butter to the puree with the blender on low until all the butter is incorporated and the sauce is emulsified. Season with salt and pepper and a dash of sugarcane vinegar.