RECIPE

Lowcountry Shrimp and Grits with Tomatoes and Greens

A dinner of plain pink shrimp cooked in a tomato, green pepper and celery skillet sauce with spinach, spooned over creamy corn grits, about 530 mg sodium a serving.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

45 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 cup white corn grits, regular or quick-cooking (not instant)
- [ ] 1 lb large raw shrimp (21–25 count), peeled and deveined, thawed; buy bags whose label lists only shrimp, with no salt, sodium or phosphate added
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 medium onion, chopped
- [ ] 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- [ ] 2 medium celery stalks, chopped
- [ ] 2 tsp paprika
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme
- [ ] ½ tsp dried oregano
- [ ] 0 tsp cayenne pepper

Method

1. If the shrimp are frozen, put them in a bowl of cold tap water for 15 minutes, then drain and pat dry with a towel. Grate the cheddar, and chop the onion, green pepper and celery.

- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] 1 can (14.5 oz, 411 g) no-salt-added diced tomatoes, with their juice
- [ ] ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- [ ] 3 cups baby spinach
- [ ] 2 tbsp lemon juice
- [ ] 1 oz reduced-fat cheddar cheese, finely grated
- [ ] ¼ cup sliced green onions
- [ ] ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp in the grits and ¼ tsp in the skillet
- [ ] 4 cups water, for the grits

2. Make the grits first. Pour the 4 cups of cold water into a 3-quart saucepan, whisk in the grits and ¼ tsp of the salt, and set it over medium heat. Stir until it comes to a gentle simmer and starts to thicken, about 8 minutes. Drop the heat to its lowest setting, put the lid on, and keep it going, stirring every 5 minutes, until the grits are soft and creamy with no gritty bite. A mile up this takes about 25 minutes instead of 20; the house adds a quarter to the simmer (our kitchen practice: Colorado State University Extension gives the quarter for simmered meats). If the pot gets stiff before the grits are soft, stir in a little hot water, a spoonful at a time, and count it as extra water.

3. While the grits cook, warm the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, green pepper and celery and cook, stirring now and then, 8 minutes, until soft.

4. Stir in the paprika, garlic powder, thyme, oregano, cayenne, black pepper and the other ¼ tsp salt. Cook 1 minute, until the spices smell warm.

5. Pour in the tomatoes with their juice and the broth. Simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes, stirring now and then, until the sauce is thick enough to hold a path when you drag a spoon through it.

6 Lay the raw shrimp in the sauce in one layer and spoon some of the sauce over them. Cover and cook 2 minutes, turn the shrimp over, and cook 1 to 2 minutes more, until every shrimp is pearly and opaque all the way through. Pull the pan the moment they are; shrimp go from done to rubbery in about a minute.

7 Fold in the spinach and cook 1 minute, until it wilts. Take the skillet off the heat and stir in the lemon juice.

8 When the grits are done, take the pot off the heat and stir in the cheddar until it melts. Spoon the grits into 4 bowls, ladle the shrimp and sauce over each, and scatter with the green onions. Serve right away.