

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



BBQ "Skrimps"



Skrimps. Nope, it's not a typo; I do realize that my post title this week is far from grammatically correct. The hallowed halls of higher education will have to grant me a special 'urban slang pass,' because I'm just sort of into the word since I heard it again recently on television. I'm having a flashback to my days in Atlanta. Skrimps. You see, ever since the New Orleans Saints' win at the Super Bowl several weeks ago, I've had NOLA and its food on the brain. I also realized that I've been putting you biscuiteers at risk for diabetes with all the carbs and sweets I've been showcasing, so thought I'd post responsibly with a protein based recipe for a change ('responsibly' excludes use of butter and cream as flavor factors). And I've chosen skrimps ... OK, shrimp.

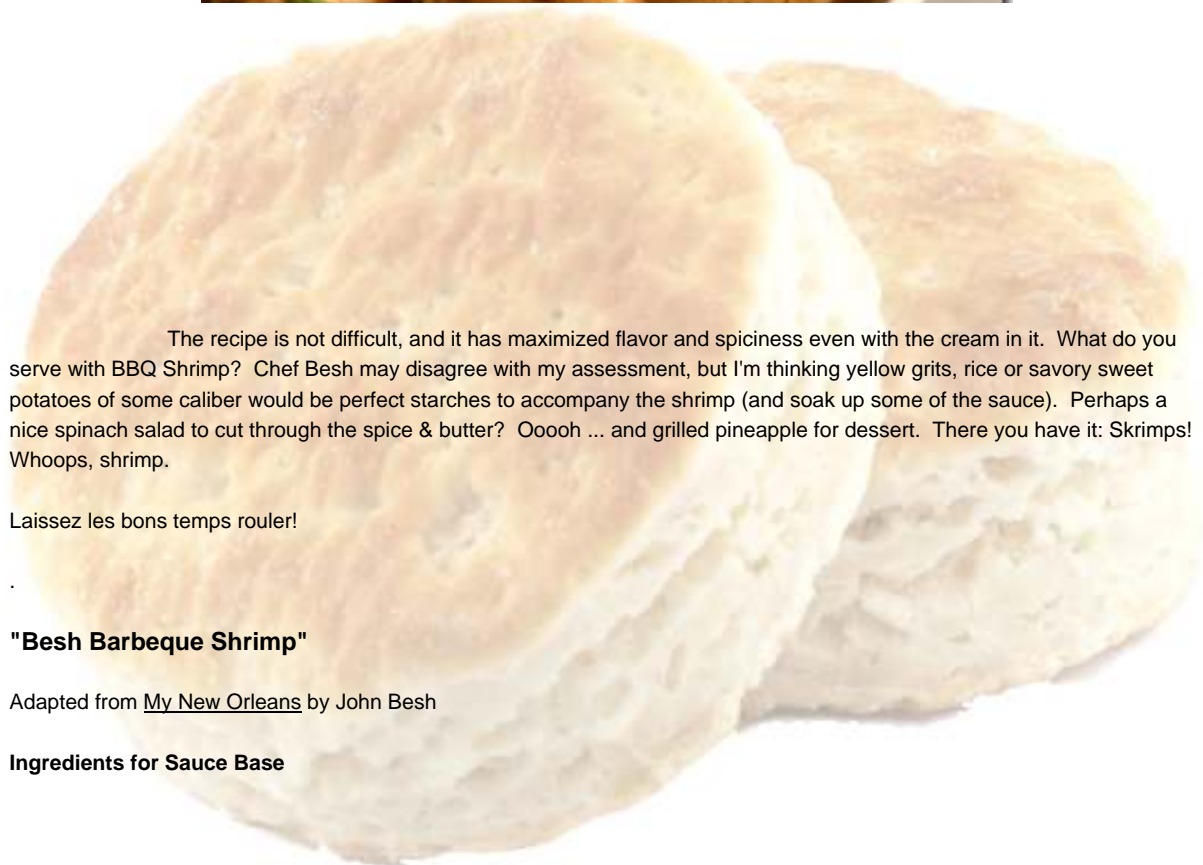
After browsing through my Cajun cookbook collection, the recipe that spoke to me was from John Besh's new-ish publication, My New Orleans. It is one big, honking cookbook and I love it; not sure if I should rest it on my coffee table for its heft and *National Geographic* grade pictures, or if I should add further bulk to my overstuffed personal library shelves with this chunky thing. For those of you that aren't familiar with the name, John Besh is the reigning darling of the New Orleans French Quarter, and a chef that you would have seen on any number of Food Network programs (he competed for "The Next Iron Chef," but sadly was out-played by Chef Michael Symon). He is quite the restaurant mogul, owning several establishments with a reputation for French influence but with modern bayou nuances (*August, Lúke*), and is an avid locavore supporting his beloved NOLA. Did I mention he's got that easy-on-the-eye media appeal to match a saucy, Southern frat boy sense of humor?

Back to the shrimp: the recipe I've been eyeballing is "Besh Barbeque Shrimp." Now most folks know that New Orleans style BBQ shrimp has nothing to do with smoke, a grill or red sauce ? pork it is not! Instead, it is usually whole shrimp with heads cooked in a salty, buttery yet sublime brown sauce made right spicy through generous use of Worcestershire and cayenne pepper. But, Besh's recipe for it takes a twist and adds cream. He admits that his ".. version is a bit more complex but is well worth the added preparation time ..." I was out to prove him right.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

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The recipe is not difficult, and it has maximized flavor and spiciness even with the cream in it. What do you serve with BBQ Shrimp? Chef Besh may disagree with my assessment, but I'm thinking yellow grits, rice or savory sweet potatoes of some caliber would be perfect starches to accompany the shrimp (and soak up some of the sauce). Perhaps a nice spinach salad to cut through the spice & butter? Ooooh ... and grilled pineapple for dessert. There you have it: Skrimps! Whoops, shrimp.

Laissez les bons temps rouler!

"Besh Barbeque Shrimp"

Adapted from [My New Orleans](#) by John Besh

Ingredients for Sauce Base

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups shrimp heads & shells
- ½ cup Worcestershire
- 2 Tbsp cracked black pepper
- 2 Tbsp Basic Creole Spices (recipe below)
- ½ tsp whole cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lemon, juiced

Ingredients for Shrimp

- 2 lbs medium Louisiana or wild American shrimp, peeled & de-veined

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- Cracked black pepper
- 1 cup sauce base
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup butter

Ingredients for Basic Creole Spices

- 2 Tbsp celery salt
- 1 Tbsp sweet paprika
- 1 Tbsp coarse sea salt
- 1 Tbsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp onion powder
- 2 tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp ground allspice

For Basic Creole Spice, mix together all ingredients in a bowl. Transfer the spices to a clean container with a tight-fitting lid, cover and store.

For the sauce base, heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over high heat, add the shrimp heads and shells, and cook, stirring often, for 5 minutes. Add the Worcestershire, black pepper, Creole spices, cloves, bay leaves and lemon juice along with 2 cups of water and bring to a boil. Once the liquid is boiling, reduce heat to moderate and simmer until it has reduced by half. Strain and reserve.

For the shrimp, season the shrimp with a little salt and lots of pepper. Put the shrimp and the sauce base, cream and butter in a large cast iron skillet over high heat. Bring the sauce to a boil and cook for 5 minutes.

PERSONAL NOTES: I was really surprised at how much more upscale this recipe was versus the 'picnic' BBQ shrimp with which I'm more familiar. Once I made the Besh version, it changed how I planned the meal since I thought corn on the cob or potato salad seemed so pedestrian next to the creamy BBQ shrimp. At any rate, the biggest hurdle for me was obtaining shrimp heads here in New England. Wild American shrimp are shipped without heads, so I made a tactical change and utilized some local Maine shrimp heads for the sauce base (although the meat wasn't used in the recipe since it is a delicate species that doesn't hold up well in this execution). And, when it came to cooking the shrimp, I actually halved the recipe and cut down on some of the butter without noticeable loss. The extra sauce base is now sitting in my freezer, awaiting use on another occasion!

GHTime Code(s): [905c4 9b4ea](#)

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