

Cajun Beans and Rice with Shrimp

The "Holy Grail" of Cajun food ingredients is on display tonight: onions, bell peppers and celery. Then there's the seasoning, with lots of paprika, garlic powder, oregano and cayenne.

Cajun food is easy to make and, as you will note from the spices, packed with flavor. It was developed by the French-speaking Arcadian people who came from Canada and settled in Louisiana.

In lieu of corn bread we'll just have a warm corn tortilla.

Preparation time: 45 minutes - Servings: 2 (plus leftovers)

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients so they are easy to add when needed. As part of prep, combine all ingredients for the Cajun Spice Mix in a small jar and shake well.

Prep 3 cloves of chopped garlic for this recipe: 1 for the Marinade/Shrimp and 2 for the Cajun Beans and Rice.

Brown Rice

1 C. brown rice
2 C. water
pinch of salt

Cajun Spice Mix (Assemble during prep)

1 T. paprika
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1/4 tsp. ground white pepper
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/8 tsp. cayenne
1/4 tsp. dried thyme

Tomatoes and Cucumbers

10 slices cucumber (peeled)
1 large tomato (sliced)
Dressing for cucumber and tomato:
2 tsp. olive oil
mixed with
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
two 6" corn tortillas

Marinade/Shrimp

Marinade for shrimp:

1 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
Juice from 1 lime
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 tsp. Asian garlic/pepper sauce
1/4 C. low-sodium veggie broth

Shrimp:

10 large, raw, frozen, shelled and deveined shrimp (thawed)

2 tsp. canola oil (for cooking shrimp)

Cajun Beans and Rice

1 tsp. olive oil
2/3 C. chopped celery (chopped)
2/3 C. yellow onion (chopped)
2/3 C. green bell pepper (chopped)
2 cloves garlic (smashed and chopped)

one 15 oz. can no-salt diced tomatoes
1 T. Cajun spice mix (made earlier)
one 15 oz. can red kidney beans (drained and rinsed)
1-1/2 C. cooked rice (from above)
cooked shrimp (from above)
juice from 1/2 of a lime

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Start by cooking rice. Bring the rice, water and salt to a boil, cover pan, reduce heat to medium-low and set a timer for 25 minutes.

Set 10 frozen shrimp in a strainer and rinse them from time to time with cold water over about a 10 minute period. When thawed, remove tails and drop them into the marinade.

Marinade

Combine marinade ingredients in a medium-size bowl. Stir well and add thawed shrimp. Toss well and let stand at least 10 minutes or until ready to cook.

Cajun Beans and Rice

1. Place oil and celery in a large sauté pan and toss over medium-high heat until celery turns bright green. Add onion and peppers. Increase heat to high and toss until onions and peppers begin to brown on the edges. Add garlic and toss until garlic becomes fragrant.
2. Add a 15 oz. can no-salt, diced tomatoes and 1-1/2 T. Cajun Spice mixture (made earlier). Cook over medium-low, heat 5-minutes.
3. Measure 1/2 C. of the drained beans into a separate bowl and mash with a fork. Add mashed and whole beans to the tomato sauce and stir until well blended. Add 1-1/2 C. cooked rice and toss. Cook over medium low heat for another 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

Shrimp

Measure 2 tsp. canola oil into a medium sauté pan and heat oil until it begins to shimmer. Lift marinated shrimp out of liquid and slide into sauté pan with oil. Cook about 3 minutes per side until shrimp turn pink. Add 1/4 C. of the marinade and toss until liquid is gone. Remove from heat. Allow to cool and cut into bite-sized pieces. Stir the shrimp pieces into the black beans and rice.

Plate the Meal

- Make a line of overlapping tomatoes and cucumbers along edge of dinner plates. Mix dressing in a small bowl and spoon over tomatoes and cucumbers.

- Scoop 2 C. Cajun Beans and Rice with Shrimp per serving onto dinner plates.

Sprinkle 2 corn tortillas with water and place between two salad plates. Warm 30 seconds in the microwave. Roll them while warm and serve them alongside beans and rice.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

I keep large, deveined and shelled frozen shrimp on hand. It's easier and safer than trying to find truly fresh shrimp at the fish counter.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com