

Classic Shrimp & Grits with Bacon: Southern Comfort Food

Few dishes embody the soul of Southern cooking quite like



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15 min

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INGREDIENTS

2 ½ cups chicken broth, preferably low sodium, divided

2 cups whole milk

4 tablespoons butter, divided

¾ cup stone-ground grits (look for "quick-cooking" stone-ground if available for faster prep)

1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

4 strips bacon (or 2-3 thick-cut slices)

1 lb. jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined

Kosher salt to taste

Black pepper to taste

Thinly sliced green onions for garnish (optional)

Red bell pepper, finely diced (optional, for adding to shrimp)

Swaps and Notes:

Grits: Stone-ground grits offer the best texture and flavor for a true Southern experience, though they take a bit longer to cook. Quick-cooking grits can be used for a faster version, but adjust liquid ratios per package directions. Avoid instant grits if possible. For extra richness, cook grits entirely in milk or a mix of milk and chicken broth.

Bacon: Thick-cut bacon renders out more flavorful grease. You can also use pancetta for a milder, Italian-inspired flavor.

Shrimp: Use fresh shrimp if possible. If using frozen, ensure they are fully thawed and patted

very dry. You can substitute with andouille sausage, smoked sausage, or even chicken (cut into small pieces) for a different protein.

Cheese: Sharp cheddar is classic, but you can experiment with other good melting cheeses like Monterey Jack, smoked Gouda, or even a little cream cheese for extra creaminess in the grits.

Spice: For a little heat, add a pinch of cayenne pepper or a dash of hot sauce to the shrimp while cooking. You can also add a finely diced jalapeño with the bell pepper (if using).

Red Bell Pepper: Adding finely diced red bell pepper with the shrimp (cook until softened) provides a nice sweetness and color. Other veggies like diced onion or celery could also be added.

Instructions:

Prepare the Grits: In a medium-sized pot, bring 2 cups of the chicken broth, the 2 cups of whole milk, 3 tablespoons of the butter, and a pinch of salt to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, gradually whisk in the stone-ground grits. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 15 minutes, whisking every few minutes to prevent sticking, or until the grits are soft and creamy. They will continue to thicken as they sit. Cover the pot and set it aside off the heat while you prepare the rest of the dish.

Cook the Bacon: In a nonstick or cast iron skillet, cook the 4 strips of bacon over medium heat until they are deliciously crispy. Remove the cooked bacon strips from the skillet and place them on a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Once cool, chop the crispy bacon into small pieces.

Prepare Skillet for Shrimp: Carefully drain all but about 2 tablespoons of the rendered bacon grease from the skillet. Leave this flavorful grease in the pan - it's essential for cooking the shrimp and building flavor.

Cook the Shrimp: Rinse the jumbo shrimp with cold water and pat them very dry with paper towels. Season the shrimp generously with kosher salt and black pepper (be mindful of salt if your shrimp is pre-treated with sodium). If desired, add a pinch of Cajun seasoning or other spices, and any optional finely diced red bell pepper to the skillet with the bacon grease. Add the seasoned shrimp to the skillet and cook over medium-high heat until just cooked through - this usually takes about 2-3 minutes per side, or until they turn pink and opaque. Avoid overcooking, as shrimp can become rubbery.

Finish Shrimp Sauce: Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter and the reserved ½ cup of chicken broth to the skillet with the cooked shrimp. Stir everything together until the butter is melted and the broth is heated through, creating a flavorful

pan sauce. Taste the shrimp mixture and add more salt if necessary.

Finish the Grits: Stir the 1 cup of shredded sharp cheddar cheese into the warm, creamy grits until the cheese is completely melted and incorporated. Taste the grits and add more salt if necessary to your liking.

Serve: Spoon a generous portion of the hot, cheesy grits into serving bowls. Carefully arrange the cooked shrimp mixture over the grits, making sure to spoon some of the delicious liquid from the skillet over the grits as well. Sprinkle with the crispy bacon pieces and thinly sliced green onions, if using, for garnish. Serve immediately and savor this comforting Southern delight!

Tips for Success:

Pat Shrimp Dry: This is crucial for a good sear and prevents the shrimp from steaming.

Don't Overcook Shrimp: Shrimp cook very quickly. As soon as they turn pink and opaque, they're done. Overcooked shrimp are tough.

Whisk Grits Frequently: Whisking every few minutes during the grits' simmer prevents lumps and ensures a creamy consistency.

Good Quality Bacon: The flavor of your bacon will greatly influence the dish, as its grease is used for cooking the shrimp.

Taste and Adjust: Seasoning is personal, especially with Cajun spices. Taste the shrimp and grits as you go and adjust salt, pepper, and other spices to your liking.

Serve Immediately: Shrimp and Grits is best enjoyed hot and fresh.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

A light, crisp green salad with a tangy vinaigrette to cut through the richness.

DIRECTIONS

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13. **Serve : Immediately:** Shrimp and Grits is best enjoyed hot and fresh.
14. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Shrimp & Grits with Bacon is a hearty and complete meal on its own. However, you can enhance it with some simple side dishes:
15. A light, crisp green salad with a tangy vinaigrette to cut through the richness.
16. Warm, crusty garlic bread or cornbread for soaking up any extra sauce.
17. Steamed collard greens or sautéed okra for an authentic Southern touch.
18. For other fantastic : Southern-inspired dishes, you might also enjoy:
19. **My This : Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed with Southern Flavor.**
20. **Or a comforting bowl of : This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort.**
21. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Shrimp and grits are truly best enjoyed fresh. The grits can stiffen and the shrimp can become rubbery when reheated. If you do have leftovers, store the grits and the shrimp/bacon mixture in separate airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 1-2 days. To reheat the grits,

add a splash of milk or chicken broth and warm gently on the stovetop, whisking until creamy again. Gently reheat the shrimp/bacon mixture in a skillet or microwave until just warm. Combine just before serving.

22. More Recipes You Will Love: If you loved the comforting and flavorful nature of this Southern delight, you'll find similar satisfaction in these other fantastic recipes:
23. For another comforting meat dish, check out : These Easy Turkey Wings are My Favorite Comfort Food for Lazy Sundays.
24. If you're into flavorful one-pan meals, my : This Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole is My Favorite One-Pan Dinner That's Always a Hit is a must-try.
25. And for a super convenient and tasty start to your day, my This One-Pan Breakfast Bake Will Make You Skip is fantastic.

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