

SHRIMP & OKRA STEW

Based on a Gumbo recipe, this one pot dish is perfect for a late Summer / early Fall transition! Use extra-large Okra cut into rounds and they will melt into the sauce and meld wonderfully with the “Holy Trinity” of onion, celery & green bell pepper. Along with the vegetables, Gumbo Filé (dried ground Sassafras leaves) also lends a greenish color to the final result, and if desired, 2 Cups of diced canned tomato can be added to the sauce- you may want to add an extra Tablespoon or 2 of roux to retain a thicker consistency. I often save shrimp shells in a freezer bag and when I have a full amount I make a stock and then freeze that to have on hand for creating sauces and poaching fish or recipes such as this. Also, this recipe for Roux will yield more than you need for just this one dish, but it will keep for many weeks either at room temperature in a cool dark spot or refrigerator for other uses, such as making a Velouté sauce.

Shrimp Stock:

Shells from 1 Pound of Shrimp, or more if available

1 medium Onion, roughly chopped

1 medium Carrot, washed & roughly chopped

4 stalks Celery, washed and roughly chopped

3 Bay leaves

1 teaspoon Peppercorns

1 Cup White Wine

Bring 5 Cups of water, wine and all ingredients to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from heat and strain. Use within 3 days or cool and freeze in a container for future use.

For Roux:

6 ounces Butter

8 ounces Flour

Melt butter until water content has stopped sputtering and then pour in flour. Use a small whisk to blend together, reduce heat to low and cook stirring occasionally with a flat-bottomed, heat-proof spatula until the color is of butterscotch. Be sure to get into the corners of the pan and move all the product when stirring so that it does not scorch. The time to do this will vary, but it will be about 20 minutes or so. The aroma

will be of toasted nuts and browned butter and smell so delicious- but don't taste it as it has no seasoning and is very hot!

For Shrimp & Okra Stew:

- 1 Pound Shrimp, peeled & deveined
- 4 ounces Andouille Sausage, diced (optional)
- 1 medium Onion, diced
- 2 stalks Celery, diced
- 2 medium green Bell Peppers, diced
- 1 Tablespoon chopped Garlic
- 1 teaspoon Oregano
- 1 medium Chili Pepper, as hot as you like
- 4 Cups Shrimp Stock
- 12 ounces extra large Okra, sliced into ½ inch rounds
- 2 Tablespoons Old Bay
- 1 Tablespoon Gumbo Filé
- 3 Tablespoons Medium Roux
- 2 Tablespoons Blended Oil

In a small bowl combine shrimp with 1 Tablespoon of Old Bay seasoning. Warm a Dutch oven over medium heat add oil, then quickly sear shrimp until just fragrant. Remove from the pot and set aside. If using Andouille, cook it at this time and then remove any excess grease with a spoon. Add onion, celery and bell pepper and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and oregano and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Pour in stock and add chili pepper and okra. Cook for 20 minutes at a simmer, stirring occasionally. At this time season with remaining Tablespoon of Old Bay and Filé. Spoon in roux and stir gently to combine and thicken the sauce. Season to taste with more salt if needed. Add shrimp and cook for a minute or two until cooked through. Spoon over bowls of steamed rice and serve with hot sauce and fresh slice of chili pepper.