

Shrimp gumbo ready in a hurry

When winter winds howl, what has more appeal than a savory soup simmering on the stove top? A speedy, just-as-delicious version that's ready when you are — after work, after school or after shopping.

Flavorful, quick-to-fix soups can be hearty and healthy, too. These simple, savory preparation tips trim time as well as fat and calories.

■ Start with a low-fat base made with instant bouillon granules, canned low salt broths and/or vegetable juices.

■ Add good-for-you, convenient ingredients like fresh or frozen vegetables, canned beans and No Yolks cholesterol-free noodles.

■ Select quick-cooking, low-fat sources of protein like lean meat, fish or seafood. Cut beef and chicken into small bite-size pieces for faster cooking, or consider treating yourself to an occasional meatless meal.

■ Use just a small amount of oil to saute meats and vegetables. Generally, 1 tablespoon or less is needed. You might also try nonstick vegetable cooking spray and/or a nonstick pan.

■ Add plenty of herbs and spices. They provide lots of flavor and no fat, and less salt will be needed.

In under 30 minutes, you can have a steaming bowl of spicy gumbo-style soup on the table. Rather than starting with a traditional roux, Louisiana Shrimp "Gumbo" features a low-fat base of chicken broth, Cajun-style stewed tomatoes and zesty Creole seasonings. Favorite gumbo ingredients like shrimp, bell peppers and onions along with No Yolks noodles make convenient, flavorful additions.

To receive more healthy eating tips and recipes, send a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to: No Yolks, Dept. 330, 520 E. Church Street, Libertyville, IL 60048.

LOUISIANA SHRIMP GUMBO

- ¾ cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 cans (14½ ounces each) stewed tomatoes or Ca-



Spicy soup: Enjoy a spicy taste of the South on a blustery winter day with Louisiana Shrimp Gumbo. Made with cajun-style stewed tomatoes, noodles, corn and tender shrimp, it's healthful, hearty and delicious.

- jun-high heat 3 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in undrained tomatoes, broth and creole seasoning. Bring to a boil. Add noodles, lower heat to medium-simmer 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in shrimp, corn and parsley.
- Continue simmering just until shrimp and corn are cooked through and noodles are tender, about 3 to 5 minutes.
- Makes 6 (1¼ cup) servings.

Saute onion, pepper and garlic in oil in Dutch oven over medi-

um-high heat 3 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in undrained tomatoes, broth and creole seasoning. Bring to a boil. Add noodles, lower heat to medium-simmer 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in shrimp, corn and parsley.

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Nutritive values per serving:
200 calories; 14g protein; 32g carbohydrate; 3g fat; 58mg cholesterol; 450mg sodium; 3.2g dietary fiber.

Take your pick of precious pears

AP — The annual parade of domestically grown pears provides luscious fresh fruit from late summer through winter, a time when many other fresh fruits are either higher priced or just out of season. Yet, like apples, no one pear variety lasts the entire season. And, just as in the case of apples, some varieties fare better than others for cooking.

is a good choice for salads and snacks.

Seckel: You'll find this small egg-shaped pear in late summer and fall. It can vary in color, from dark green with a red blush to dark red all over. One of the sweetest types of pears, it is great for snacks or for pickling and canning whole.

Buying and storing pears

When shopping for pears, look for fruit without bruises or cuts. Also, remember that skin color may not indicate ripeness. The color of some pear varieties does not significantly change during ripening.

For baking, look for pears that are fairly firm. If you plan to eat pears out of hand, look for those that yield to gentle pressure at the stem end.

To ripen too-firm pears at home, place them in a paper bag or a loosely covered bowl. Let them stand at room temperature for a few days. You can tell most varieties are ripe when they yield to gentle pressure at the stem end. However, yellow Bartlett pears become a bright yellow, and red Bartletts become a brilliant red when ripe. Once ripened, fresh pears keep well in the refrigerator for several days. They do not freeze well.

Comice: This chubby, green, or greenish-yellow winter pear has a thick, short stem and sometimes a red blush on one side. It is not recommended for cooking or baking but is considered a good pear to eat fresh, especially with cheese, because it is very sweet and juicy.

Forelle: A small, golden, bell-shaped pear, the Forelle has a freckled skin and red blush. Sweet and juicy, it is good for eating out of hand.

Nellis: This egg-shaped winter variety has russet-colored skin. It

Common pear varieties

Here are some of the common pear varieties you'll see in your market during the cooler months, with some hints on how to cook or serve them.

Anjou: This egg-shaped, winter pear wears a pale green, yellow-green, or red skin. Because it is sweet and juicy, it is good for salads and snacks.

Bartlett: The yellow or red Bartlett is bell-shaped. Available in the summer and fall, this popular variety is good for canning and cooking because it holds its shape. It also is an excellent pear for eating fresh.

Bosc: This long-necked winter variety has golden brown skin with russeting or browning. The fresh fruit has a creamy texture and is full of flavor. The Bosc holds its shape well during cooking, so it is a good choice for baking, poaching and broiling.

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Preparing pears

To decide whether pears should be peeled, follow these rules of thumb:

■ Leave the peel on for eating out of hand or for cutting into pieces for salads.

■ For cooking pears in sauces, remove the peel, because the skin toughens and darkens as it cooks in liquid.

■ When baking pears, take your choice. If you leave the peel on, cut away a strip of peel to add a decorative touch.

Try Thai food for a dining adventure

AP — Try Thai next time you're thinking about eating out. Thai foods rely on familiar Asian cooking methods, tossed with some deliciously different ingredients, such as lemongrass, ginger, coconut, curry and tamarind sauce.

Appetizers

Moo satay: Sliced pork marinated in coconut milk and herbs, then char-broiled. Served with both peanut and cucumber sauces.

Por pia (Thai spring roll): Fresh vegetables and egg in a soft rice wrapper. Served with tamarind sauce.

Kanom jeeb: Ground pork and ham, vegetables and herbs steamed in a rice wrapper. Served with a special sweet and spicy sauce.

Soups

Tom yum: A spicy, broth-style soup made with meat, mushrooms, lemongrass, garlic, coriander, Thai chili paste and ginger.

Tom kha: Similar to tom yum, except coconut milk replaces the Thai chili paste.

Main Dishes

Pud Thai: Thai-style fried noodles made with tofu, bean sprouts, sweet radish, onion, ground peanuts, lime juice and sometimes shrimp.

Thai curry: You may find as many as 15 kinds of Thai curries, ranging from green curry, which is made with green peppers and chilies, to Panang Curry.



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