

Southern Shrimp & Grits

Grits

- 1 ½ cups milk
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup quick grits (or white polenta)
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese
- Black pepper to taste

Shrimp

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 medium red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 medium onion, diced small
- ½ jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 teaspoons salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 cups heavy cream
- one 14 ½ ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 2 Tblspn fresh thyme, chopped small
- 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Cholula or other hot sauce to taste
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

1. *To make the grits:* Combine 2 cups of water, the milk, and salt in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring the mixture to a boil and slowly whisk in the grits. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover the saucepan and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes, or until thickened. Stir in the mascarpone cheese and black pepper. Cover and keep warm over a low heat.

2. *To make the shrimp:* Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring, until the mixture is medium golden, about 5 minutes. You have just made a roux! Add the onions and garlic and cook till soft then add the bell peppers, jalapeños, celery, salt, and pepper. Cook until the vegetables are softened, about 3-4 minutes.

3. Slowly whisk in the cream. Once the cream is fully incorporated, slowly whisk in the tomatoes and thyme. Let the sauce simmer and thicken a bit. Stir in the shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shrimp are just opaque, about 4 minutes. Add the Cholula to taste. Garnish with Parmesean and chopped parsley.

Wilted Greens with Bacon and Currents

- 1-2 bunches of greens (kale, mustard, beet tops, collards)
- 2 strips of the best thick cut bacon you can find, cut into small pieces
- ½ small onion, diced small
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tspn salt
- 1 Tblspn sugar
- A few grinds of pepper
- A few dashes of hot sauce (Cholula!)
- 4 Tblspn cider vinegar
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ½ cup dried currents

Wash all greens thoroughly, strip out any thick, woody stems (kale especially). Tear or chop all greens into 3inch pieces, approximately! If using collards, which are much tougher than the other greens, stack the leaves and cut in fine strips.

Cook the bacon in a large heavy bottomed pot until cooked but not crispy. Add onion and cook till soft and translucent. Add the garlic, salt, sugar, pepper and hot sauce. Cook for 2 minutes. Add the vinegar and simmer a few minutes to reduce the liquid. Add the greens, broth and currents and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the greens till wilted and tender, using tongs to turn greens in broth.

Depending on the greens this could take as little as 3-4 minutes or as long as 10 minutes. Taste your greens and stop cooking when you like the taste of them.

Caramel Cake: 8 inch square pan

For cake

- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons sifted cake flour (not self-rising; sift before measuring)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature 30 minutes
- 1 cup well-shaken buttermilk

For caramel glaze

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract or 1/2 vanilla bean

Make cake:

Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Butter an 8-inch square cake pan and line with a square of parchment paper, then butter parchment.

Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Beat butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until pale and fluffy, then beat in vanilla. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. At low speed, beat in buttermilk until just combined (mixture may look curdled). Add flour mixture in 3 batches, mixing until each addition is just incorporated.

Spread batter evenly in cake pan, then rap pan on counter several times to eliminate air bubbles. Bake until golden and a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool in pan on a rack 10 minutes, then run a knife around edge of pan. Invert onto rack and discard parchment, then cool completely, about 1 hour.

Make glaze:

Bring cream, brown sugar, corn syrup, and a pinch of salt to a boil in a 1 1/2-quart heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Boil until thick and smooth, 12 to 14 minutes, then stir in vanilla or whisk in 1/2 vanilla bean.

Put rack with cake in a shallow baking pan and using a skewer, poke holes all over top of cake. Then pour hot glaze over top of cake, allowing it to run down sides and into holes. Cool until glaze is set, about 30 minutes.