



Freshwater Shrimp Boils:

Experience the Excellent Taste of Virginia Farmer-Grown Freshwater Shrimp

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There are many ways to cook and enjoy the taste of freshwater prawns or shrimp. Some of these options, along with recipes, are provided in this brochure. Remember: It's always a festive and memorable party when guests enjoy a shrimp boil eaten at standing-height tables in the backyard.

Note: "Prawns" often refers to freshwater crustaceans, but most people use "shrimp" and "prawn" interchangeably, as is done here.

The timeline that follows assures that the boil ingredients will be ready at about the same time. For an even better "how-to" understanding, watch the "Simple Home Boil" video of a shrimp boil being prepared and eaten (Kauffman 2013). Suggestions for hosting a boil for a large group are available in Virginia Cooperative Extension publication AAEC-28, "Freshwater Shrimp Boils: A Festive Community Event for Fun and Profit" (Kauffman, Walker, and DuBois 2012).



Shrimp Boil Timeline

Organize the raw ingredients (ingredient list follows) before starting to cook so you can move smoothly through the steps.

Task	Minutes before serving
Put the small redskin potatoes into boiling water seasoned with shrimp spice and salt.	50
Check potatoes for doneness after they have been in the boiling water for 20 minutes. Drain water when potatoes are just a little too firm to eat (about 25 minutes). Keep drained potatoes in a covered pot off the stove to finish cooking. Can temper for 30 minutes.	30
Put corn on the cob into boiling water, and then add the precooked link sausage.	25
After about 5 minutes, make sure the sausage is 150°F. Drain water from the corn and sausage. Remove from stove and keep covered until ready to serve.	20
Put shrimp into boiling salted water (seawater briny) and cover. Pull a shrimp from the water with tongs at 2 1/2 minutes and check temperature. Check every 30 seconds thereafter. When 155°F or so is reached, drain the shrimp. It usually takes 3 1/2-4 minutes to reach this temperature, but cooking conditions vary, so pay more attention to the temperature than the time.	15
Sprinkle dry shrimp spice on shrimp in cooler or pot. Mix and adjust seasoning as needed. Close the cooler or cover the pot.	10
Get everyone to the tables. Evenly distribute the potatoes across the bottom of family-style serving trays or aluminum pans. Add the corn and sausage over the potatoes and top it off with the shrimp.	5

EAT and ENJOY!

Watch the Virginia Cooperative Extension video, "Simple Home Boil," for instructions on how to eat head-on shrimp (Kauffman 2013).



What You'll Need

Ingredient List

Suggested Per-Person Quantities for a Freshwater Shrimp Boil

- 1/2 pound small redskin potatoes (If potatoes are bigger than what can be eaten in a couple of bites, halve or quarter them. However, a smaller potato is better because it will be more likely to stay intact.)
- 1 1/2 ears of corn (snap ears in half)
- 1/4 to 3/8 pound precooked link sausage, sliced into 3/4-inch to 1-inch lengths (Andouille sausage is often used, but any semi-hot to hot link sausage is OK. If the sausage is not precooked, fry it the night before so it can be quickly reheated to 150°F in the boiling water on the day of the boil. Raw sausage takes too long to cook in boiling water and lacks eye appeal.)
- 1 pound head-on freshwater shrimp/prawns
- Salt
- Dry shrimp spice (Old Bay or Zatarains Shrimp Boil [in most supermarkets] or J.O. No. 1 Seafood Seasoning from J.O. Spice Company [in some stores and online at www.jospices.com])

Remember: Multiply the amount of each ingredient by the number of people you will serve.

Optional Condiments

- Cocktail sauce
- Lemons
- Butter
- Hot sauce or Sriracha sauce

Equipment for a Simple Home Boil

- 3 to 4 stock pots (easier if pot has a strainer basket, but not necessary)
- Tongs
- Instant-read thermometer
- Colander
- Cleaned and sanitized coolers for storing and tempering the hot food (optional)
- Assorted knives, cutting boards, gloves, potholders, etc.
- Table-leg extensions to raise outdoor tables to standing height (See "Simple Home Boil" video [Kauffman 2013] for an example.)

Recipes

Prawns/Shrimp and Grits

(6 servings)

Ingredients

1 cup old-fashioned or stoneground grits, uncooked
4 cups chicken broth
4 strips bacon
1/2 + 1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup pepper jack cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, separated
6 green onions, chopped
1/2 poblano pepper, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1/2 lemon, juiced
1 pound prawns/shrimp, peeled
1 10-oz. can of tomatoes and green chilies, drained
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
Parsley for garnish

Directions

1. Bring the chicken broth to a boil. Add grits and 1/2 teaspoon salt, whisking at first to keep the grits from clumping. Reduce heat to medium-low and partially cover. Cook until broth is almost absorbed, about 15 minutes for old-fashioned grits or 20 minutes for stoneground grits.
2. As grits are cooking, fry the bacon in a large skillet until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside, crumble when cool. Save the bacon grease in the pan.
3. Just before the grits finish cooking, add the cheeses, 1 tablespoon of the butter, and the drained tomato mixture. Stir and cook for 2-3 more minutes, until cheese is melted. Cover and set aside.
4. Add 1 remaining tablespoon of butter to saved bacon grease and heat until medium-hot. Add prawns and sauté until they start to turn pink.
5. Add poblano pepper, garlic, onions, lemon juice, black pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Cook for about 3 more minutes until the prawns are almost done. Cover the pan, remove it from the heat, and let it rest.
6. Divide the grits among 6 bowls.
7. Spoon the prawns mixture on top of the grits. Sprinkle with crumbled bacon and add parsley for garnish.

Adapted from a recipe by Delores Fratesi, Lauren Farms, Leland, Miss.

Grilled Cilantro Lime Prawns/Shrimp

(2 servings)

Ingredients

1 pound head-on prawns/
shrimp

Marinade:

1 lime
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro,
chopped
1 teaspoon garlic, finely
chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon chipotle powder
1 packet sucralose (Splenda)



Directions

1. Shave 1 teaspoon of zest from the lime. Juice the lime into a bowl and add the zest. Add the remaining ingredients, except prawns, to the bowl and mix.
2. Add prawns to the bowl and gently toss until they are coated with the marinade. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Preheat a grill to medium-hot.
4. Skewer the prawns (skewering optional, but it makes handling on the grill easier). Grill at medium-hot for 2-4 minutes on the first side and 1-3 minutes on the second side. Time depends on the size of the prawn.
5. Remove from the grill when the prawns are tinged pink. The best way to judge doneness is with an instant-read thermometer. Internal temperature should read slightly above 150°F. Allow prawns to temper for a minute before serving.
6. When eating, detach the prawn head with a light pull. Juice from the head adds great flavor. Just suck gently to discover this delicacy. Peel the tail and enjoy.

References

Kauffman, D., M. Walker, and L. DuBois. 2012. Freshwater Shrimp Boils: A Festive Community Event for Fun and Profit. Virginia Cooperative Extension. Publication AAEC-28. http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/AAEC/AAEC-28/AAEC-28_pdf.pdf.

Kauffman, D. 2013. Cooking a Simple Family Shrimp Boil. Virginia Cooperative Extension. Video AAEC-41. <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/AAEC/AAEC-41/AAEC-41.html>.