

GINGER SHRIMP À LA KENNY

The much requested recipe for ginger shrimp gets knocked up a notch to *Fast, Cheap, and Slightly Out of Control* because you can pretty much get decent 35-40 shrimp for \$3.99 a pound at any Asian grocery store worth its weight in bok choy¹. Even *Whole Paycheck* sells frozen shrimp for \$6 a pound. Should you be really lucky, you'll be near an Asian grocer that's more popular than Dim Sum¹ that will sell U-25 tiger shrimp for \$6-8 a pound. Should this happen, your course is set.

This recipe started as an experiment in making my grandmother's salt and pepper shrimp without the hassle of deep fat frying. Traditionally, salt and pepper shrimp is made by drenching the shrimp in tapioca powder, deep frying for 10 seconds, and then stir frying with shallots, scallions, salt, and pepper. Similarly to Julia Child, I have reached the conclusion that deep fat frying at home isn't worth it. It costs too much (even if you buy your fat from Costco) because most everything (potatoes included) causes oil to go nasty after about two fryings. Note that fryings isn't even a real word so you can see the gravity of the situation here. It also stinks up the house and then there's the question of disposal. Hint: not down the drain!

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds shrimp, no more than 40 (i.e. x-40) to a pound, preferably between 20—30 per pound (i.e. x-30)
a 2-inch piece of ginger
4 shallots
4-6 cloves of garlic
1/2 onion
6 stalks green onion, finely sliced
1/4 cup olive oil
2-4 teaspoons kosher salt depending on salt preference
freshly ground black pepper to taste

Peel the ginger and cut into pieces. Peel and halve the shallots. Peel the garlic. Peel and quarter the onion. Put all of these ingredients into a mini-food processor and process for 10—20 seconds until a nice paste is formed. Do not over-process. Alternatively, you could finely chop all of the ingredients or combine them in a mortar & pestle.

Heat a large heat-absorbing pan or pot on high heat. Add the oil and swirl for a few seconds, then add the ginger-shallot-garlic-onion paste and half of the green onion. Fry for about a minute and a half. Add the shrimp and season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Stir fry the shrimp for approximately five minutes or until they are just cooked through. Plate the shrimp and sprinkle on the rest of the green onion. Serve with hot steaming jasmine rice.

The technique of making the ginger-shallot-garlic-onion paste works well for any kind of stir-fry whether it be vegetable or meat. It'll stick to just about anything and make it tasty. Add some hot chilies to the mix to really knock it up a notch.

¹ Note, however, it must do much more than this to be more popular than Dim Sum².

² If nothing else, this cookbook will live in infamy for the number of side notes within side notes. Like my speaking of Vietnamese, I usually let my side notes speak for themselves but here a bit of explanation is needed. The phrase "more popular than Dim Sum" comes from the game *Emperor: Rise of the Middle Kingdom*. Now, even if games give you a giant headache, you have to check this game out. (Note the use of *you have to* in the previous sentence.)

If for nothing else, you have to play the game in order to click on the stereotypical Asian characters that roam around your city and, after enough hours of playing, watch your perfectly built house of cards (i.e. city) come shattering down to resemble Flint, Michigan. That's because once one villager decides to leave, it's all over. You'll have work shortages which will lead to other people leaving which will lead to civil unrest which will lead to, well, Flint, Michigan. One way to get this to happen very quickly is not to build enough inspector towers. Here's the thing about inspector towers: you can never have enough. That's because the doughty men whom you hire to roam around the city inspecting buildings are about as useful as a hole in the head. Imagine this: An inspector wanders by a building and declares it to be "stronger than Mount Tiashan." Sadly, the second he walks past the building, it bursts into flames. Now, the thing you have to realize about inspectors in *Rise of the Middle Kingdom* is that they care about the past as much as an old Zen Master. Just like the Rooster would advise: "The past is gone." So your inspector tunnels ahead, oblivious to the fire that's raging behind him. As you desperately delete buildings around the blazing area, somewhere clear across town another inspector who has returned to his tower senses the fire. He then runs out to the nearest fountain, grabs a bucket of water, and hauls it clear across town where he is able to exhaust but one tile (a building consists of 9) of fire. He then repeats this process. Should you not have deleted buildings, half your town is gone by this point. As you can see, this game was made to teach us all the valuable lesson of impermanence. Study it well my friends. Study it well.