

Crock Pot Shrimp and Grits

Anytime I make shrimp, I always feel the need to call everyone “Bubba” and watch a repeat of Forrest Gump. I love the scene where Bubba lists off “shrimp is the fruit of the sea. You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, saute it. Dey’s uh, shrimp-kabobs, shrimp creole, shrimp gumbo. Pan fried, deep fried, stir-fried. There’s pineapple shrimp, lemon shrimp, coconut shrimp, pepper shrimp, shrimp soup, shrimp stew, shrimp salad, shrimp and potatoes, shrimp burger, shrimp sandwich. That- that’s about it.” But Bubba forgot about one of my favorites– shrimp and grits.

Living in the South, recipes for grits are as common as dinner rolls– you can have traditional ones, flavorful ones, different recipes for breakfast, lunch or dinner and no matter how you fix it, it’s good. Depending where you go in the South, grits take on different traditions. In Charleston, the beginning of the grits is a few pieces of bacon and that has become a common trend across the country; the smokiness of the bacon is a nice balance against the other flavors. I’ve read that grits is actually the official state food of South Carolina. Maybe we should petition to make it an official food of our whole country!

I prefer this recipe because it’s not too spicy and has a lot of flavor without being overwhelming. Keeping it simple makes it easy to serve for any meal of the day or as a special side dish. If you’d like to spice it up, add a few drops of Tobasco to the whole mix or to your own bowl.

4 cups water or chicken broth

1 c. quick-cooking grits, uncooked

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1 lb small shrimp, peeled and cleaned, vein removed

2 T. butter

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

1 can diced tomatoes, drained

1 t. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 t. red pepper flakes (optional)

Start by putting the broth, salt and grits in the pot. Most of the cooking needs to happen to these three ingredients. Cook on low for 6-8 hours. Saute the onion and garlic in the 2 tablespoons butter until it's all tender and cooked through, then add the shrimp for another 4-5 minutes of sauteing or until the shrimp are no longer pink. Add this mixture to the grits along with the cheese, red pepper flakes and can of diced tomatoes. Cook for another hour on low.