

Creamy Shrimp and Grits

For the grits:

5 cups water
3 cups skim milk
2 tablespoons diet margarine
2 cups stone ground corn grits

For the gravy and shrimp:

4 strips bacon, sliced into 1/4-inch pieces (I use bacon bits or diced lean ham)
2 pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined

3 cloves garlic, minced
8 thinly sliced scallions, white and green parts kept separated
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
1 1/2 cups skim milk
Salt and cayenne or white pepper, to taste
Tabasco sauce, optional

To make the grits: In a small saucepan combine the water, milk and margarine. Add salt to taste. Bring to a simmer. Add the grits. Cook over medium low heat, stirring often, for 15-20 minutes until grits are tender. Add white pepper to taste. Cooked grits should have the same consistency as oatmeal or Cream of Wheat.

To make the gravy and shrimp: Cook bacon until crisp in a sauté' pan. Drain grease. Add shrimp, garlic and scallion whites to the bacon. Sauté until the shrimp just begins to firm up. Dust the mixture with flour and stir until well-blended. Add tomatoes and milk; stir until well-blended. Bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately over grits, garnishing with the remaining scallion greens. Add a little Tabasco sauce to kick it up if you like! Excellent accompaniments are fresh sliced beefsteak tomatoes and a roll. Makes 8-10 servings.

Note: Instead of using stone ground grits you can make your favorite instant grits. You can substitute ham or smoked sausage for the bacon or use pre-cooked bacon pieces. Canned petite-diced tomatoes, drained, make a fine substitute for fresh tomatoes.

Use of trade names does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension of the products named nor criticism of similar products not mentioned.

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