

Pan-Seared Shrimp

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How to Pan-Sear Shrimp

We wanted shrimp that were well caramelized but still moist, briny, and tender.

The Problem: A good recipe for pan-seared shrimp is hard to find. Of the handful of recipes we uncovered, the majority resulted in shrimp that were either dry and flavorless or pale, tough, and gummy--hardly appetizing.

The Goal: Pan-searing can produce the ultimate combination of a well-caramelized exterior and a moist, tender interior. If executed properly, this cooking method also preserves the shrimp's plumpness and trademark briny sweetness.

The Solution: Peel the shrimp first, and skip the brining--the added moisture inhibits browning. Instead, season the shrimp with salt, pepper, and sugar, which brings out the natural sweetness and aids in browning. Cook in batches and then pair with thick, glazelike sauces with assertive ingredients and plenty of acidity as a foil for the shrimp's richness.

Pan-Seared Shrimp

The cooking times below are for 21/25 shrimp (that is, the size of the shrimp is such that there are 21 to 25 in 1 pound). If 21/25 shrimp are not available, adjust cooking times slightly. Either a nonstick or traditional skillet will work for this recipe, but a nonstick will simplify cleanup.

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 1/2 pounds shrimp (21/25 count), *peeled and deveined*
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon granulated sugar

Method

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until smoking. Meanwhile, toss shrimp, salt, pepper, and sugar in medium bowl. Add half of shrimp to pan in single layer and cook until spotty brown and edges turn pink, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; using tongs, flip each shrimp and let stand until all but very center is opaque, about 30 seconds. Transfer shrimp to large plate. Repeat with remaining tablespoon oil and shrimp; after second batch has stood off heat, return first batch to skillet and toss to combine. Cover skillet and let stand until shrimp are cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve immediately.

Pan-Seared Shrimp with Garlic-Lemon Butter

The cooking times below are for 21/25 shrimp (that is, the size of the shrimp is such that there are 21 to 25 in 1 pound). If 21/25 shrimp are not available, adjust cooking times slightly. Either a nonstick or traditional skillet will work for this recipe, but a nonstick will simplify cleanup.

Serves 4

Ingredients

Garlic-Lemon Butter

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, *softened*
- 1 medium clove garlic, *minced*
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves
- 1/8 teaspoon table salt

Shrimp

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 pounds shrimp (21/25 count), *peeled and deveined*
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon granulated sugar

lemon wedges, *if desired*

Method

1. Beat butter with fork in small bowl until light and fluffy. Stir in garlic, lemon juice, parsley, and 1/8 teaspoon salt until combined. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until smoking. Meanwhile, toss shrimp, salt, pepper, and sugar in medium bowl. Add half of shrimp to pan in single layer and cook until spotty brown and edges turn pink, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; using tongs, flip each shrimp and let stand until all but very center is opaque, about 30 seconds. Transfer shrimp to large plate. Repeat with remaining tablespoon oil and shrimp; after second batch has stood off heat, return first batch to skillet along with flavored butter and toss to combine. Cover skillet and let stand until shrimp are cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges, if desired.

Pan-Seared Shrimp with Ginger-Hoisin Glaze

The cooking times below are for 21/25 shrimp (that is, the size of the shrimp is such that there are 21 to 25 in 1 pound). If 21/25 shrimp are not available, adjust cooking times slightly. Either a nonstick or traditional skillet will work for this recipe, but a nonstick will simplify cleanup.

Serves 4

Ingredients

Ginger-Hoisin Glaze

- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons water
- 2 scallions, *sliced thin*

Shrimp

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 pounds shrimp (*21/25 count*), *peeled and deveined*
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/8 teaspoon granulated sugar

Method

1. Stir together hoisin sauce, rice vinegar, soy sauce, ginger, water, and scallions in small bowl. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until smoking. Meanwhile, toss shrimp, salt, red pepper flakes, and sugar in medium bowl. Add half of shrimp to pan in single layer and cook until spotty brown and edges turn pink, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; using tongs, flip each shrimp and let stand until all but very center is opaque, about 30 seconds. Transfer shrimp to large plate. Repeat with remaining tablespoon oil and shrimp; after second batch has stood off heat, return first batch to skillet along with hoisin mixture and toss to combine. Cover skillet and let stand until shrimp are cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve immediately.

Pan-Seared Shrimp with Chipotle-Lime Glaze

The cooking times below are for 21/25 shrimp (that is, the size of the shrimp is such that there are 21 to 25 in 1 pound). If 21/25 shrimp are not available, adjust cooking times slightly. Either a nonstick or traditional skillet will work for this recipe, but a nonstick will simplify cleanup.

Serves 4

Ingredients

Chipotle-Lime Glaze

- 1 chipotle chile en adobo, *minced*
- 2 teaspoons adobo sauce
- 4 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves

Shrimp

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 pounds shrimp (*21/25 count*), *peeled and deveined*
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon granulated sugar

Method

1. Stir together chipotle chile, adobo sauce, brown sugar, lime juice, and cilantro in small bowl.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until smoking. Meanwhile, toss shrimp, salt, pepper, and sugar in medium bowl. Add half of shrimp to pan in single layer and cook until spotty brown and edges turn pink, about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; using tongs, flip each shrimp and let stand until all but very center is opaque, about 30 seconds. Transfer shrimp to large plate. Repeat with remaining tablespoon oil and shrimp; after second batch has stood off heat, return first batch to skillet along with chipotle mixture and toss to combine. Cover skillet and let stand until shrimp are cooked through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve immediately.