



Winedog Speaks

Shrimp on the Barbee

We are moving into the barbecue weekend of all weekends with the July 4th holiday looming and I hope you are ready to make tasty things happen wherever you might be firing up the grill. It doesn't matter if its kosher hotdogs, stuffed pork chops, baby back ribs, chicken, burgers or a juicy rib eye steak. Everything tastes better when cooked and enjoyed out-of-doors.

I lived for years in south Florida and firing up the barbecue had a different connotation there as most people either roasted a hog, Cuban style, or assembled everything from fresh lobster from the Keys to red snapper or those devastating pink shrimp from Key West. I've lived in both worlds and learned to appreciate a wide variety of fare right off of the coals.

I thought it might be fun to share a really simple way to prepare shrimp on the grill for this holiday.

Grilled Shrimp with Dry Rub (Serves 6 to 8)

3 to 4 pounds raw shell-on shrimp, use jumbo's if possible (about 20 to the pound)



If you can't get them really fresh you will want to get them flash frozen and thaw them out under running cold water right before you begin to prepare them. Using poultry shears cut the shrimp along the back so you can remove the mud vein with the tines of a fork or a sharp skewer. Not all shrimp will have these pesky veins but most everyone agrees its no fun to leave them in.

Next you will prepare the dry rub/marinade:

- 3 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning
- 1 tablespoon dried garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika (also substituting smoked paprika is great)
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons ground sea salt
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons dried dill leaf
- 1 teaspoon lemon salt

You won't need all of this but it can be stored through your whole grilling season in an airtight jar and once you've tasted it you will find lots of ways to use it.

Place your cleaned shrimp in a large freezer Ziploc bag and gradually add your dry rub working the whole bag until all of your shrimp are coated evenly. The rub is a bit spicy so you can vary the amount you use based on your crowd's appreciation of the "sting," if you know what I mean.

The bag should go into the refrigerator and marinate for at least one hour and up to three.

Place your bamboo skewers in water during this time and allow them to soak up as much moisture as possible to keep them from burning when they hit the grill.

When you are ready to place the shrimp on the skewers you'll probably want to use two skewers for each if the shrimp are actually jumbo's. The skewers will be parallel and run through the upper and lower section of each shrimp. Four to five shrimp per set are about right but use your own judgment based on size...you don't want a lot of bamboo showing between the shrimp.

Use a direct grilling technique and liberally oil your grate with olive oil before beginning. The skewers will take about 1 to 3 minutes per side to cook and you will know when they are done by their pink color and firm texture. Avoid overcooking as it tends to make the shrimp rubbery. These will be ready to serve right off of the barbeque with a liberal dose of lemon juice and your fingers. (The only way to eat them!)

Some great sides include grilled sweet corn-on-the-cob, fresh coleslaw, baked potatoes with all of the fixings and, of course, hot crusty bread of your choice. I happen to like grilled garlic bread.

Seafood and good wine is a natural combination and this is a time to consider personal tastes first and forget about "appropriate" matches. Great German Riesling is always a favorite along with a Russian River Chardonnay, Napa Sauvignon blanc or a top flight Pinot Grigio.

Plan ahead and arrange a nice place to chill your wines and bring out good glasses even though you're outside. A great wineglass does in fact make a difference in taste and people appreciate the ring of a well crafted glass. (I've tasted very good wines in plastic cocktail glasses and I might as well have served a lesser wine.)

Lastly, be responsible! I want to stress that enjoying adult beverages comes with an added obligation to yourself, your loved ones and everyone around you. Do not drink and drive! Please!

I hope you will remember those patriots who provided the opportunity for July 4th and our brave sons and daughters who continue to insure our freedoms. I ask that every one of you remember that leaving the preservation of your freedoms up to the politicians is tantamount to Constitutional suicide. Stay connected and involved as we move into election season.

God bless, America!

Allison, a native of Warren County in Southwestern Ohio, has been in the fine wine and fine dining field for 32 years in the South Florida, Chicago and Southwestern Ohio markets. He writes a weekly syndicated column, manages a fine wine business and is the executive chef for Winedog Fine Wines and Catering Services. You can visit his column archive at www.winedog.com and take your comments and questions directly to him at 888-288-0668 or email him at winedog@winedog.com. He has resided with his wife and two sons since 1999 in the country outside of Morrow, Ohio

