

Spicy Mexican Shrimp Pasta

Ingredients

- 1 pound (454 g) jumbo shell-on shrimp (16 to 20 count), peeled and deveined, shells reserved
- 1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt, plus more to taste; for table salt, use half as much by volume
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 8 tablespoons (114 g) unsalted butter
- 10 medium cloves garlic (50 g)
- 5 serrano chiles (50 g), stemmed, deveined, and seeded if desired (see notes)
- 1 pound dried linguine or fettuccine
- 2 teaspoons grated lime zest plus 2 tablespoons (30 ml) lime juice from 1 whole lime, divided
- 1 loosely packed cup fresh cilantro leaves, minced

Directions

1. Cut shrimp in half crosswise. In a large bowl, toss shrimp with 1 teaspoon kosher salt and baking soda. Refrigerate for 15 minutes or up to 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, add butter and reserved shrimp shells and heat over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and bubbling and shells are bright orange, 7 to 10 minutes. In a fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl, strain butter with shells. Discard shells and return shrimp-infused butter to skillet.
3. In a mortar and pestle, smash serranos and garlic into a rough paste; alternatively, finely mince by hand. Set aside.
4. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook pasta, stirring frequently for first 30 seconds to prevent sticking, until pasta is just shy of al dente (about 2 minutes less than package directions). Drain pasta, reserving 2 cups cooking water.
5. Return skillet with butter to medium heat. Add shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, about 2 minutes. Using tongs, transfer shrimp to a bowl or plate.
6. Reduce heat to medium-low and add crushed serranos and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until mixture softens and is aromatic, 3 to 5 minutes.
7. Remove pan from heat. Stir in lime juice.
8. Add pasta and 1 1/2 cups reserved cooking water, set over high heat, and cook, stirring and tossing rapidly, until pasta is al dente and sauce is slightly thickened and noodles are glossy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add additional pasta water, a few tablespoons at a time, if needed, to evenly coat the pasta.
9. Add cooked shrimp, lime zest, and cilantro and toss to combine. Season with salt to taste. Serve immediately.

Notes

The heat of serrano chiles varies greatly. It's best to sample a small piece before you cook and adjust accordingly.

