

Shrimp Scampi

Serves 4

To me, Shrimp Scampi is decidedly about the shrimp, and less so about pasta (unless it's these shells, then it's absolutely about the pasta). The important thing here is that you have a lot of saucy, glossy businesses all over whatever you're serving it on (pasta, rice, grains, wilted greens) or sopping it up with (crunchy olive oil toast). My one piece of non-negotiable wisdom is to season the shrimp with plenty of salt and pepper before adding it to the skillet (I once did not do this, and it really ruined things for me/the shrimp).

As for the shrimp, any sized shrimp would work well here. I always prefer a large or jumbo wild shrimp (fresh or frozen), especially if doing a larger pasta shape as I did here. Head-on prawns would be an incredible choice if you can find them and feel like going the pasta-less route. I've done this with small bay shrimp tossed with linguini and 12/10 would recommend that, too. All (as-responsibly-sourced-as-possible) shrimp are welcome!

10 ounces pasta, like shells, rigatoni, linguini, truly whatever shape you like (optional)

Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling

2 pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined if using pasta, shell-on, head-on preferred if not

8 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 small or 1/2 large red onion, finely chopped

8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

3/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes or 1/2 thinly sliced jalapeno, serrano, habanero, etc (optional, only if you want it spicy)

1/2 cup dry white wine

1 teaspoon fish sauce, I like megachef or red boat (optional)

3/4 cup parsley, finely chopped

1/4 cup finely chopped chives

1 lemon, halved

1. If serving with pasta, cook pasta in a large pot of salted water until al dente. Drain, toss with a healthy drizzle of olive oil and toss so it doesn't stick together; set aside. Usually, I'd have you do this after your pasta ingredients are cooked, but everything happens so fast I want the pasta to be ready.

2. Season shrimp with salt and pepper; set aside (do not skip this step).

3. Heat butter and 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until butter is melted and foamy, about 2 minutes. Add the onion and sliced garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the onion has softened and starting to brown on the edges and the garlic is completely softened, 4–6 minutes. If you wanted a spicy shrimp scampi, this is when I'd add the crushed red pepper flakes or fresh, sliced pepper.

4. Add shrimp and toss in the hot fat until the shrimp is bright pink on the outside and starting to curl up (cute!), about a minute or so. Add white wine and fish sauce (if using), season again with salt and pepper and let it simmer around the shrimp, gently steaming and cooking them all the way through as the liquid reduces to create a thing that could only be described as "a very good sauce."

5. If serving with pasta, toss the shrimp and all its fantastic sauce with the parsley, chives and cooked pasta (do this in a bowl, do this in the skillet, wherever you have space). Toss, toss, toss! The whole thing should be saucy and glossy: two words that always belong together.

6. Squeeze lemon over everything before serving, scatter more herbs if you like.