



ROCKY'S KITCHEN • CAJUN-INSPIRED DINNER

Bayou Firecracker Shrimp & Andouille Gouda Grits

Cajun shrimp, browned andouille, creamy smoked-Gouda grits, fried okra & hot-honey butter

SERVES 4 • PREP 30 MIN • COOK 35 MIN • TOTAL 1 HR 5 MIN

INGREDIENTS

Smoked-Gouda grits

- 3 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup whole milk, plus more as needed
- 1 cup stone-ground grits (not instant)
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 cup shredded smoked Gouda (4 oz)
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

Crispy okra

- 8 oz fresh okra, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning
- Neutral oil, for 1/2 inch of frying
- Kosher salt

Shrimp & andouille skillet

- 12 oz fully cooked andouille sausage, 1/2-inch coins
- 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning, divided, plus more to taste
- 1 tbsp neutral oil, only if the skillet is dry
- 1 small yellow onion, diced (about 3/4 cup)
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 celery ribs, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 can (14.5 oz) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, with juices
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 tsp vegan Worcestershire sauce (fish-free; choose soy-free if needed)
- 1 tsp Louisiana-style hot sauce, plus more to serve
- 1/2 lemon
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley

Hot-honey butter

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp hot honey
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice

METHOD

1. Start the grits — Bring stock and milk just to a simmer in a heavy saucepan. Whisk in grits and salt. Reduce heat to low; cook 25–35 minutes, stirring often and adding a splash of milk if they tighten before tender.

2. Prep the okra — Soak okra in buttermilk. Mix cornmeal, flour, and 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning; drain okra and toss in the coating. Spread on a tray and hold while you build the skillet so it can be fried just before serving.

3. Brown the andouille — Brown sausage in a wide skillet over medium-high heat for 4–5 minutes. Transfer to a plate, leaving about 1 tbsp drippings; add neutral oil only if needed.

4. Build the trinity sauce — Cook onion, bell pepper, and celery in the skillet for 6–8 minutes until softened and browned at the edges. Add garlic, tomato paste, and 1/2 tsp Cajun seasoning; stir 1 minute. Add tomatoes, stock, Worcestershire, and hot sauce. Simmer 6–8 minutes until glossy and slightly thickened.

5. Fry the okra; cook the shrimp — Heat 1/2 inch oil in a deep skillet to 350°F. Fry okra in two batches for 3–4 minutes until crisp; drain on a rack and salt. Keep water away from hot oil. Meanwhile, toss shrimp with the remaining 1 tsp Cajun seasoning. Return sausage to the sauce; add shrimp and cook 3–5 minutes, turning once, until opaque and 145°F at the center. Squeeze in the lemon and stir in half the scallions and parsley.

6. Finish and stack — Stir butter, smoked Gouda, and black pepper into the tender grits; loosen with milk if needed. Melt the hot-honey butter ingredients together. Spoon grits into bowls, add the shrimp-andouille sauce, crown with fried okra, and drizzle lightly with hot-honey butter. Finish with remaining herbs and hot sauce.

ROCKY'S NOTES

- Taste the Cajun seasoning before adding salt; blends vary widely in sodium and heat.
- A half drizzle is the point: hot-honey butter should brighten the smoky spice, not make the bowl sweet.
- For the crispest okra, fry it last and add it only at the table.
- Contains shellfish, dairy, and wheat; check packaged sauces and sausage labels for soy and other allergens. Use a fully cooked andouille; cook shrimp to 145°F and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
- Flavor target: Tart tomato and lemon first, smoky sausage and cheese underneath, then a restrained sweet-heat finish. Add the fried okra only at serving so it stays crisp.