

Nutrition & You

Shrimp Secrets

(NAPSA)—There's good news for cooks searching for a versatile seafood ingredient that's both nutritious and tasty. A simple salad is transformed into a succulent and satisfying meal with protein-packed shrimp. A ho-hum sandwich turns hearty and wholesome with nutrient-rich shrimp.

Good news about shrimp

This is good news for the thousands of Americans who are searching for what to eat. A recent study by the International Food Information Council Foundation revealed that more than 60 percent of Americans are more interested in hearing about what to eat than what not to eat. From "trans-fat free" to "no preservatives," phrases about what not to eat bombard us from graphics at the grocery store to national television advertising campaigns.

More than a dozen health and nutrition organizations recommend that we eat seafood at least twice a week, which amounts to approximately 39 pounds per person a year. However, the average American eats just 16 pounds of fish and shellfish annually—far less than the amounts of poultry and red meat consumed annually.

Protein, Bs and Omega-3s

Jennifer McGuire, MS, RD, National Fisheries Institute, strongly advocates the consumption of seafood, which is loaded with healthy nutrients such as protein, B vitamins, iron and omega-3s, but not with calories and fat. And here's the secret: The No. 1 reason people choose to eat certain foods is taste. Shrimp, known for its sweet yet mild flavor, is the perfect choice and it's also a snap to prepare.

To help, here are a few helpful hints courtesy of The Shrimp Council:



Adding grilled shrimp to leafy greens can convert a simple salad into a delicious, protein-packed meal.

Buying shrimp

- Did you know many fish markets will peel and devein shrimp on request for a minimal charge?

- Shrimp should be purchased in the shell for grilling to lock in the moisture.

Thawing frozen shrimp

- Thaw shrimp in the refrigerator on a low shelf one full day before cooking. Let shrimp defrost slowly for 24 hours in a container covered lightly with plastic wrap, then remove any liquid that has collected in the packaging or the container. Cook shrimp within one day.

- With less time, shrimp can be thawed in a leakproof plastic bag submerged in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes until the food has defrosted. Do not advance the process with warm water because shrimp will begin to cook. Cook shrimp immediately after thawing.

Cooking shrimp

- Shrimp are properly cooked when the texture changes from mushy to firm, the color turns from brownish-gray to a warm orange-pink, and the meat becomes opaque. Shrimp are overcooked when they curl tightly inward and the flesh becomes rubbery.

The Shrimp Council is part of the National Fisheries Institute. Learn more at www.eatshrimp.com.