

# Shrimp Etouffée

This is basically Paul Prudhomme's crawfish etouffée from his *Louisiana Kitchen* made with large prawns, which are a more readily available substitute for rarely seen freshwater crayfish. (One day, I must make a crayfish trap for use in the local canal.) I've also calmed down the heat a little by reducing the cayenne pepper. If you would like it hotter, you know what to do.

I've reduced the amount of flour in the roux a little and it still seems very high. Fear not; there is a reason: the more (i.e. darker) the flour gets cooked, the more it loses its thickening properties. Since this should be a dark roux, it needs more flour to thicken it. Making a darker roux without burning the flour takes a little faith and practice but do have a go. Try a little less at first, if you want. Once experienced, you could try increasing the flour content to the original recipe level of 75g.

## Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	15 mins
cooking time:	20 mins

## Ingredients

Seasoning mix:

- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp white pepper
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 40g onions, finely chopped
- 40g celery, finely chopped
- 40g green pepper, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp groundnut oil
- 60g plain flour
- 700ml seafood stock
- 40 large prawns, raw & prepared
- 200g butter
- 1 bunch spring onions, finely chopped

## Method

Start by combining the seasoning mix and dividing it evenly between two small containers. Then combine the chopped onion, celery and green pepper in a bowl.

Now the tricky part - making the roux (a.k.a. cajun napalm). A cast iron skillet is best, preferably of a light interior colour so you can see the colour change. Be very careful not to splash yourself or anyone else. Heat the oil over high heat almost to smoking point. Prepare to stir immediately with a wooden flat bladed spatula and toss in the flour. Stirring constantly and making sure to scrape all the flour from the bottom of the pan all the time, continue cooking while the mixture darkens to a red-brown colour which should take about 3 - 5 mins. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the chopped onion, celery and green pepper mix together with one portion of the seasoning mix. Continue stirring until the mixture cools.

Bring the seafood stock to simmering point and stir in the roux mixture whisking constantly to avoid lumps. Reduce the heat to low and cook the thickened mixture for a few minutes, stirring constantly, to cook out the flour taste. Remove from the heat and set aside.

In another pan, melt 100g of the butter over medium heat and sauté the prawns and chopped spring onions for a minute. Add the thickened stock mixture and the remaining portion of seasoning mix. Stir well and cook gently for about three minutes; the prawns should be just cooked. Add the remaining 100g butter and stir or shake the pan gently until the butter dissolves (about a minute).

Serve surrounding mounds of cajun rice.