

Popcorn Shrimp

Crispy golden popcorn shrimp recipe with three cooking methods - deep fry, bake, or air fry. Perfect appetizer with panko coating and spicy seasoning.

15 min

PREP

15 min

COOK

30 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 lb shrimp
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 cup flour
- 2 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

1 Prepare the shrimp

Pat 1 lb shrimp completely dry with paper towels and season lightly with salt.

2 Set up breading station

Set up three shallow bowls: in the first, whisk together 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1 tsp salt, and 1 tsp pepper. In the second, beat 2 eggs with 1/4 cup milk until smooth. In the third, place 1 cup panko breadcrumbs.

3 Heat the oil

Pour vegetable oil into a heavy-bottomed pot to a depth of 3 inches. Heat oil to 350°F (175°C), using a thermometer to monitor temperature.

4 Bread the shrimp

Working with one shrimp at a time, dredge in seasoned flour and shake off excess. Dip into egg mixture, letting excess drip off. Roll in panko breadcrumbs, pressing gently to help coating stick.

5 Fry the shrimp

Add 6-8 breaded shrimp to the hot oil, being careful not to overcrowd. Fry for 2-3 minutes until golden brown and crispy, turning once halfway through.

6 Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Repeat with remaining shrimp, allowing oil to return to 350°F (175°C) between batches.

7 Serve immediately while hot and crispy with cocktail sauce, tartar sauce, or your preferred dipping sauce.

Tips

Pat shrimp completely dry with paper towels before breading to ensure the coating adheres properly and becomes crispy during cooking.

Use a three-station breading setup with flour, beaten eggs, and seasoned panko breadcrumbs. Keep one hand for dry ingredients and one for wet to avoid clumpy fingers.

Maintain oil temperature between 350-370°F when deep frying. Too hot and the coating burns before the shrimp cooks; too cool and the shrimp absorb excess oil.

Don't overcrowd the pan or fryer - cook in small batches to maintain oil temperature and ensure even cooking.

Let breaded shrimp rest for 5-10 minutes before cooking to help the coating set and adhere better during the cooking process.

Season your panko breadcrumbs with Old Bay, garlic powder, paprika, or cayenne pepper for extra flavor in every bite.

Use a wire rack over a baking sheet to drain fried shrimp - this prevents the bottom from getting soggy while maintaining crispiness.

For extra crunch, double-dip the shrimp by going through the egg and breadcrumb stations twice before cooking.