

No topping this **SHRIMP** & **GRITS** dish



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Unless, of course, you have bacon

By DANIEL NEMAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Excuse me for a minute while I suck up to my boss.

Not long ago, my editor mentioned in passing that her favorite thing to eat is shrimp and grits. Suddenly, and for reasons as mysterious as they are inexplicable, I was struck by a consuming desire to write about shrimp and grits.

Fortunately, as with practically everyone who has ever had it, I happen to like shrimp and grits. I still remember the first time I tried it: It was at a little neighborhood bistro in Richmond, Virginia, perhaps 30 years ago. Despite living only a few hours from South Carolina, where the dish originated and was popularized, I had not even heard of it at the time.

I was instantly intrigued. Soft, creamy grits topped with highly spiced, perfectly prepared shrimp? It sounded amazing. And it was. It was one of those dishes that you know you are going to be ordering for the rest of your life.

I don't recall ever trying to cook it before. But for the sake of my editor (more sucking up!) I decided to make the best, richest and creamiest shrimp and grits that I possibly could.

And then I walked back that idea. I had initially planned to use heavy whipping cream in the grits, but no one needs that many calories in their lives. Half-and-half will be fine, I thought.

It was more than fine. It was spectacular. Frankly, the heavy cream would only have gilded the lily and then drowned it in cream.

Making shrimp and grits is a two-part process. Part one is the grits. Part two, as you have already deduced, is the shrimp.

Usually, grits are made just by pouring hominy (treated cornmeal) into boiling water and cooking it until the corn has absorbed the liquid and become soft and palatable.

But soft and palatable is not good enough for the shrimp and grits I wanted to make. I wanted my grits to have oomph, to have pizzazz. I wanted them so good that it would be an insult to call them grits.

I began with stone-ground grits, which are to grits what whole-grain flour is to all-purpose flour. It includes the outer part of the kernel, the part that gets stuck in your teeth when you eat popcorn. This process gives the grits more texture, but that is less important than the fact that it also gives them a richer taste of corn.

More significantly, I did not boil them in water. Good cooks know that grains always taste better when they are cooked in a flavorful stock, so I used chicken broth for half of my cooking liquid. The other half was half-and-half.

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Shrimp and grits, topped with crispy bacon.
Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS



JANE HAGEN
GARDENING WITH GRANDMA

Plants are ready for fertilizer

Now that maximum daylight hours are here, our plants will be growing at their peak rate so this is a good time to remember to fertilize. For indoor plants, it's recommended that fertilizer be applied at half strength. This reduces the chance that full application rates would burn plants that can't escape their potted confinement.

All outdoor plantings made just this year will also benefit from a diluted strength as well. Once root growth is slowing down, a full-strength application is fine. For established perennials and shrubs, they will be able to handle the full-strength amount. How can you tell when the root growth has slowed down? When your plants set flowers. This gives you the go ahead sign to give them that extra boost they will need.

Mulching with two parts garden compost to one part steer manure is a good, general purpose fertilizing mixture. It also gives the added layer of protection for soil temperature stabilization. Plants that had a leaf layer as winter protection should have had that layer removed by now.

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Several types of blackberries grow in the Pacific Northwest, both native and invasive.



WENDY SCHMIDT
BETWEEN THE ROWS

Blackberries and their yummy kin

Himalayan (*Rhus armeniacus* or *R. bifrons*) and evergreen (*Rhus laciniatus*) blackberries are invasive species. They grow into huge mounds and impenetrable thickets.

Himalayan blackberries have lobed leaves composed of three or five leaflets. Their leaves are dark green on the upper surface and gray-green matte lower surface.

Evergreen blackberries have deeply cut, lacey leaves. Native blackberry or dewberry (*Rubus ursinus*), are vines which trail low to the ground. Common blackberry is a species thousands of years old.

Blackberries are biennial large shrubs of the family Rosaceae. They grow from either seeds or daughter plants growing from arching canes whose tips contact the soil and grow roots. The first year, blackberry plants do not bloom. The second year plants will flower, fruit, then die.

In late summer, berries ripen and can be gathered for jams, jellies, pies, and cobbles. Berries can be frozen or canned for use at a later time.

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Exploring the history of Goss Motors' current home



GINNY MAMMEN
OUT AND ABOUT

The 1904 Sanborn map shows there was a large dwelling at 1416 Adams Ave. in downtown La Grande. Checking the city directory, we find this was the home of Zora E. Patty, where she offered furnished rooms for rent. Records show she was there until at least 1912.

The 1930 Sanborn map shows a blacksmith shop at 1418 Adams Ave., and the city director indicates this was Bay & Barnaby Blacksmith. The shop had been located there in 1893 when the Bay brothers were the proprietors.

Until the early 1930s there were a variety of wooden structures located in the eastern part of this block. Prior to being razed, various new and used car dealers and other small businesses such as W.H. Lowe's Second Hand Store, Kemp's Second Hand Store, Ambrose Wright Vulcanizing, Duffey's

Confectionery and Art Jones painting, paper hanging and decorating shop occupied the wooden buildings located at 1418-1420 Adams.

Around 1930 Jullius Roesch cleared a portion of this area, next to the building now known as Pat's Alley, to construct a brick building to be used as an annex for Larison-Frees Chevrolet.

About this same time, Walter Price and George Anderson were planning to expand Piggly Wiggly grocery sales by adding store No. 2 into the original Mackey Building, one of the last wooden buildings, which was just east of Roesch's new building. However, the city commission determined the building wasn't safe and would not permit the expansion. This was remedied early in 1930 when it was decided to tear down the existing building and construct a brick building at 1422 Adams, the current Mackey Building, for the grocery store and to use the vacant lot on the east side for a parking lot.

After Piggly Wiggly left in 1942, the Mackey Building was vacant for a time. The F&T Trading Post was located there in



Downtown La Grande around 1927.

Fred Hill Collection

1945, followed by Fritz's Trading Post, Globe's Used Furniture and, in the 1980s and 1990s, Dolvin's Appliances. Today, Goss Motors occupies both the Mackey Building and the building constructed by Roesch to the west.

Who was C.L. Mackey? Claude Lebbeus Mackey was born in Illinois in 1882. When he was in his early 20s he moved westward and arrived in Albany, Oregon, where he was employed

in a food stable for four years. There he met Nora Grace Bussard, and the two were married on Aug. 27, 1905. Right after the wedding Nora and Claude left on the train. After stopping in Portland for a few days they came on to La Grande where Claude had purchased a feed store, one that happened to be in the 1400 block of Adams.

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