



Melissa d'Arabian via AP

Shrimp paired with pineapple brings elegance and sweetness

By **Melissa d'Arabian**
The Associated Press

After all the cooking and shopping that the holidays inspire us to do, I'm looking forward to pulling out some easy recipes that use pantry ingredients I keep on hand. One of my favorite items to keep in the freezer is frozen shrimp.

I have both cooked and uncooked versions. Raw shrimp cook up in minutes and have more flavor, so I use them for pasta dishes and easy sheet-pan suppers. But cooked shrimp have their place on my menu, too. I love how quickly they thaw for salads and appetizers and other cold preparations.

The downside to pre-cooked shrimp is the texture is a notch softer. My solution is to buy the large shrimp and then cut it in half. I know this may be counter-shrimp culture, so feel free to leave them large, but the solution works for us.

A super easy go-to recipe for shrimp for

us is my Shrimp and Pineapple Brochette, which uses easy pantry ingredients — you can even use canned pineapple — to create something that still feels high-end.

It's healthy and versatile, working as either a meal when paired with some greens, a first course, or even an appetizer for parties. Shrimp brings protein and elegance, while pineapple balances out with both sweetness and acid. I use prepared pesto for some fat and flavor, and I highly recommend keeping a jar of prepared pesto in the freezer to scoop out for recipes. But, if you don't have any, just substitute a bunch of chopped herbs, olive oil, and lemon juice for an easy, tasty version. And with skewers, I think it goes without saying that you can swap in whatever fruit you have in your kitchen — grapes, grapefruit, orange segments, and even canned mango all work beautifully.

Food Network star Melissa d'Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook, Supermarket Healthy.

Shrimp and Pineapple Brochette

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 10 minutes

1 pound large cooked shrimp, cleaned, thawed if frozen
1 cup pineapple cubes, about 1/2-inch each, drained and halved if using typical large canned chunks (grapefruit or orange may also be used)
1 tablespoon prepared pesto sauce
1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
black pepper
a pinch (1/8 teaspoon) kosher salt
chopped fresh mint, parsley, or basil, optional
12 small or 8 large skewers, or 24 toothpicks if making appetizer bites

Cut shrimp into halves or thirds, depending on size of shrimp. Thread the skewers with alternating shrimp and fruit. Lay the skewers on a platter.

In a small bowl, add the lemon juice to the pesto sauce to thin it and stir. Drizzle the pesto mixture over the skewers, aiming mostly for the shrimp. Drizzle a few drops of olive oil onto the skewers. Top with freshly ground black pepper, the kosher salt, and chopped herbs, if desired. Serve as a first course, an appetizer, or with a green salad for a light meal.

Nutrition information per serving: 130 calories (35 calories from fat); 4 g fat (1 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 145 mg cholesterol; 720 mg sodium; 1 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 16 g protein.

Rough times for smugglers who knitted North Korea to the world

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border officials and the officials are being changed every nine to 12 months, then that makes things all the harder," said Justin Hastings, a University of Sydney scholar who studies North Korean trade networks. The smugglers' most recent troubles, he believes, are from Chinese officials enforcing sanctions and "cracking down in ways they hadn't done before."

In 2012, North Korean border officials

began ordering smugglers to "regulate" their businesses, says the ex-smuggler now living in China. Eventually, as the informal rules tightened, he was limited to what he could carry. His profits plummeted.

"I was only making enough money to pay for my travel expenses and my meals," he says. He left for China when his business collapsed, moving in with relatives.

Life was supposed to be easier on this side of the border. But he barely speaks Chinese, can't find work, and knows almost no one.

"All my friends are there in North Korea," he says, nodding toward the mountains. His one solace is soju, a vodka-like alcohol loved in both Koreas. "I drink here at my home. One shot with each meal, every day."

Creamed Kale with Parmesan

By **Katie Workman**
The Associated Press

My father and grandfather, both no longer here, loved nothing better than a serious steak dinner at their favorite steakhouse, Peter Lugar's, in New York City. If there was something to celebrate, or the desire to indulge an extravagant comfort-food craving, there was one clear choice.

Ordering was easy: a starter of thickly sliced tomatoes and onions with the house dressing, which was also the house steak sauce (think of Worcestershire sauce disguised as a thick dressing), and possibly a wedge salad with bacon and blue cheese. To follow, there was a T-bone steak, sliced but with the bone served up for nibbling, with fried potatoes and creamed spinach. And after belts had been loosened, perhaps a piece of key lime pie.

I think that for most of us, to like creamed spinach is to love creamed spinach. You have to go all in if you go at all. And I love creamed spinach.

But because envelopes need the occasional pushing, I recently decided to cream up some kale with a generous amount of cream and Parmesan cheese in memory of my dad and grandpa. I know that in some circles, kale is considered the king of the greens, and in others, it's considered "over." I don't belong to either camp, but I do love cooking with kale.

It has similar nutritional perks to



CREAMY & COMFORTING. Creamed Kale with Parmesan pairs well with a roast chicken, a piece of seared or roasted fish, or a juicy T-bone steak. (Sarah E. Crowder via AP)

spinach (not that I am selling this particular recipe as healthy), and holds up to heat with more presence. If you want, you can use baby kale in this recipe, which isn't as tough as fully grown kale, and has no thick ribs to remove, which makes the prep easier.

This recipe begs to be served up next to a roast chicken, a piece of seared or roasted fish, or, in the most perfect of all worlds, a juicy T-bone steak.

Katie Workman has written two cookbooks focused on easy, family-friendly cooking, Dinner Solved! and The Mom 100 Cookbook.

Creamed Kale with Parmesan

Serves 4 to 6

Start to finish: 20 minutes

1 1/2 pounds kale
1 1/2 cups heavy cream
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
Pinch red pepper flakes
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

If you are using mature kale, trim the tough middle rib from the leaves, and roughly chop the leaves. If you are using baby kale, roughly chop that. Rinse them in a colander. Add the kale to the boiling water and boil for four to five minutes, until the kale is fairly tender. Drain in a colander, rinse with cold water, then use your hands to squeeze as much water as you can out of the kale.

Place the cream in the pot you used to cook the kale. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then lower the heat to medium and continue to simmer until reduced by roughly half, about four minutes. Season with salt and pepper, as well as the red pepper flakes. Add the blanched kale and simmer, stirring often, until the cream sauce is further reduced and coats the kale, about three minutes. Stir in the Parmesan until the cheese is melted and everything is blended well.

Transfer to a serving bowl and serve hot.

Nutrition information per serving: 272 calories (223 calories from fat); 25 g fat (15 g saturated, 1 g trans fats); 88 mg cholesterol; 332 mg sodium; 9 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 6 g protein.

China says United States should curb demand for opioids, not blame China

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past year.

He urged the U.S. to share more data and police intelligence with Chinese authorities and said rampant over-prescription of pain medication and lax cultural attitudes toward drugs had fuelled massive demand for opioids in the U.S.

Insufficient drug education and the trend in some states of legalizing marijuana have hurt drug enforcement efforts, he said.

"As many states decriminalize marijuana, the public's attitudes and trends of thinking toward drugs will also have a bad effect" on the fight against hard drugs, Yu said.

Chinese officials have been eager to tout their collaboration with American counterparts on drug enforcement as a bright spot in the occasionally rocky relationship.

Officials in Beijing said they busted a

fentanyl factory in November and seized 10.36 pounds of the substance thanks to a tip-off from U.S. Immigration and Customs about a major online purveyor named "Diana" that turned out to be a front for a 19-person drug ring scattered across China.

China wanted to work more closely with U.S. law enforcement, as well as authorities in Mexico, a transshipment point, Yu said.

China has backed a successful U.S. proposal to add several fentanyl precursors to a U.N. list of controlled substances. China has listed the two chemicals, NPP and 44-ANPP, under domestic drug laws, officials said.

More than 66,000 people in America died of drug overdoses in the year ending May 2017, a jump of 17.4 percent from the year before, according to provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency reports that most cases of fentanyl overdose are linked to illicitly produced batches of the substance.



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