Idiot's Kitchen Recipe – Shrimp Bisque

Recipe from www.idiotskitchen.com - Adapted from Ina Garten

Ingredients:

1 pound, large fresh shrimp (preferable wild caught rather than farmed)
4 cups fish or seafood stock
2 Tablespoons olive oil
3 leeks, rinsed and chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Pinch cayenne pepper
¼ cup brandy (or Cognac)
¼ cup dry sherry
4 Tablespoons butter (½ stick)
¼ cup flour (Gluten Free flour is fine)
2 cups half & half
1/3 cup tomato paste
Salt & Pepper

Peel and devein 1 pound of fresh, large shrimp and SAVE the shells. Set the shrimp aside for later. Place the shells in a large saucepan over medium high heat and roast for 2-3 minutes until they are vibrant pink and smell very shrimpy. Add 4 cups of store bought or homemade fish or seafood stock, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 15 minutes.

While the stock cooks, trim the root end and the dark green tops off of 3 leeks leaving only the white and light green parts. Cut each leek in half and gently separate the layers, running them under cool water to remove any dirt and grit. Chop the leeks into half rounds. Finely chop 3 cloves of garlic.

Heat 2 Tablespoons of olive oil in a large soup pot or dutch oven over medium heat. Add the leeks and cook gently for 10 minutes until tender but not browned. If the leeks start to brown around the edges, lower the heat of the pan.

After 10 minutes, add the chopped garlic and the reserved shrimp to the pot. Season with a dash of cayenne pepper and cook the shrimp for only about 3 minutes. Do not over cook the shrimp.

Add ¼ cup brandy (or Cognac) and ¼ cup dry sherry to the pot. Stir up any bits from the bottom of the pot and cook for an additional 3 minutes. Transfer the leeks, shrimp and any juices to a food processor and pulse only a few times to coarsely chop. It is much better to have a bigger chop with recognizable shrimp bits than to over process at this step.

By now your shrimp stock should be done. Drain the shells out of the broth using a fine sieve or strainer. Add water as needed to make the strained stock equal 4 cups.

Add ¼ cup of butter (½ stick) to the pot you used to cook the shrimp & leeks. Melt the butter over medium heat and add ¼ cup of flour to make a roux. Stir the flour into the butter for 2 minutes to make a thin paste.

Slowly add 2 cups of half & half, stirring with a wooden spoon and/or whisk to remove any lumps. When you have a lovely thick sauce, add the chopped shrimp & leeks back to the pot. Stir in the strained 4 cups of fish stock.

Add 1/3 cup of tomato paste. Season to taste with salt & pepper and possibly a dash more cayenne.

Cook for another 5 minutes on low to combine all of the flavors and heat through. It is very important that the soup DOES NOT BOIL once you have added the half & half so be sure you are cooking on LOW heat.

Serves 4 – great leftover (warmed in a thermos, and drunk while driving to Miami.)