

Cooking

Strictly Shrimp: A Passionate Guide to the World's Favorite Seafood

A.D. Livingston

Burford Books

978-1-58080-090-7

(April 25, 2001)

The breezes flowing out of the pages of this book are full of the aromas of shrimp grilling, boiling, steaming, and baking. The author, a strong and charming presence, grabs readers and pulls them into his laid-back world of southern Florida. This is a man who loves to cook.

Livingston divides his cookbook into sections based on the various cooking guises of shrimp: on the grill, in the boil, in the skillet, on the skewer, in the stuffing, and so on. There are sixteen sections in all, covering all the ways the reader might ever dream of eating shrimp: Jambalaya, Shrimp and Avocado Salad, the Memphis Boil, Greek Shrimp, or even Cajun Kabobs.

This cookbook is chock-full of accurate information on sizes and types of shrimp and useful culinary tips. Livingston's delivery is earthy and entertaining. In the headnote for Mesquite Shrimp, he says: "Some chefs make much ado about what kind of wood chips to use for flavoring meat on the grill and even set forth all kinds of subtle descriptions of flavor. I won't say these people are dishonest; they just have a vivid imagination and (like wine critics) a large vocabulary of adjectives."

When Livingston's recipes stay simple, he shines. The recipe for A.D.'s Grilling Machine Shrimp is brilliant—he layers the shrimp with fresh dill leaves before closing the lid on George Foreman's grilling machine. Pomegranate Shrimp are similarly simple with a succulent basting of butter and pomegranate juice. However, when the author ventures too deep into unfamiliar culinary paths, his feet muddy. Tempura is revered for its simplicity and delicacy. Livingston's Japanese Shrimp Tempura begins with a tasty batter of flour, egg yolk, ice water, and beer. He could have stopped there but went on to add whipped egg whites, soy sauce, dry mustard, salt, and pepper.

Despite Livingston's six other cookbooks, he misses a step in writing recipes, consistently neglecting to put the ingredients into the order that they are used. He does steady

readers with a wealth of information before each recipe and at the beginning of each chapter, so home cooks should be able to follow his lead.

This unassuming little book will prove itself every time the cook prepares shrimp. Livingston may pull readers in with promises of sea breezes, a lounge chair, and a cold beer, but when it comes time to eat he'll haul them into the kitchen to share his shrimp secrets.

Nancy K. Allen