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Classic Shrimp Cocktail and Gin Martinis

Even if you're having a solo party this New Year's Eve, you still deserve to celebrate the fact that 2020 is almost behind us -- and what a year it has been! This recipe welcomes 2021 with perfectly poached shrimp cocktails and ice cold gin martinis. Bottoms up . . . and ONWARD!

Shrimp Ingredients: (Serves 4)

24 large, 21-25 count deveined shrimp (keep tail intact)
2 lemons, 1 juiced and 1 cut into wedges
1 small onion, cut into wedges
3 cloves garlic, smashed
1 stalk celery cut into large pieces
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon peppercorns

For Garnishing:

Several sprigs of Italian parsley
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Homemade Cocktail Sauce Ingredients:

3/4 cup ketchup
2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce (optional)
1/4 teaspoon celery salt

Classic Gin Martini (Serves 1)

3 oz. gin (chilled in the freezer)
1/2 oz. dry vermouth (chilled in the refrigerator)
Garnish: 3 pimento-stuffed olives or lemon twist

Shrimp Cocktail Directions:

1. Combine lemon wedges, lemon juice, onion, garlic, celery, and bay leaves in a large pot filled 3/4 full with water. Bring the water to a boil and add the salt, sugar, and peppercorns. Once the water comes to a rolling boil, remove the pot from heat. Add the shrimp to the hot water and cover with a lid. Let the shrimp cook in the hot water for 5-8 minutes until shrimp are pink and opaque.
2. While the shrimp are poaching, fill a large bowl with ice and water. Once shrimp are cooked, remove from the hot water by straining in a colander; discard the remaining contents. Plunge the shrimp into the ice and water and let them chill completely. Drain and serve immediately, or chill in the refrigerator for up to 12 hours.
3. While the shrimp are chilling, make the cocktail sauce by combining the cocktail sauce ingredients in a small bowl or wide-mouthed glass.
4. Serve the shrimp in glasses for individual servings, or on a large platter for serving a small group. Garnish with fresh lemon wedges and sprigs of parsley leaves.

Classic Gin Martini Directions:

1. Place martini glasses in the freezer to chill.
2. Meanwhile, combine gin and vermouth in a mixing glass full of ice. Stir for 30 seconds.
3. Strain into a chilled martini or coupe glass and garnish with olives or a lemon twist. Enjoy immediately!