

Camarones a la Vinaigretta

(Shrimp Vinaigrette)

A Basque "Botana" or hors d'oeuvre

*The single most important thing about this dish is the consistency of **sizing of the chopped pieces of onion, pimiento, tomato and bell pepper**. All these ingredients should be chopped into 1/8" pieces, more or less.*

These are my father's original amounts. I typically quadruple the recipe (or more). I also typically use small, frozen "shrimp meat", which you can buy anywhere. Considering a can of shrimp as 6 ounces, using 2.5 pounds of shrimp meat would require using roughly 6 times the ingredients listed. I find this sufficient for a party of 50 or fewer.

Ingredient	Preparation
1 can shrimp	I typically substitute frozen cocktail shrimp ("shrimp meat"), but the dish then needs added salt.
1 can pimiento	Since most canned pimientos are already chopped, just drain thoroughly and chop lightly.
1 bell pepper	Discard top and bottom, removed seeds and veins. Chop into 1/8" pieces.
1-2 roma tomatos	Discard top(s), remove seeds and juice. Chop into 1/8" pieces.
2 teaspoons canned shrimp juice <i>-or-</i> 1/8 teaspoon sea salt	Test saltiness after marinating; you may add more later if blended well.
2 teaspoons capers	Chop capers lightly.
1 generous dash black pepper	Freshly ground, of course.
1 medium onion	Chop into 1/8" pieces.
3 tablespoons olive oil	Don't use "extra virgin"; the olive oil flavor is essential to the dish.
2 tablespoons tarragon wine vinegar	The "vinegariness" of the dish may be adjusted by adding more. I usually prefer a bit more.
1 pinch thyme	Fresh or dried.

1 pinch rosemary	I grind the (dried or fresh) rosemary in a coffee grinder.
1 pinch marjoram	

Preparation

Chop all vegetables and canned pimientos into 1/8-inch bits, more or less. Bell peppers should be cored with seeds and veins removed. Tomatoes should be quartered first so that seeds and juice may be easily removed before chopping up. Pimientos should be drained before chopping up. Mix all ingredients ***except shrimp*** in a non-reactive bowl, crumbling all spices between fingertips before adding to mixture. Mix well. (If using shrimp meat, defrost shrimp and drain well.) Add shrimp and fold into other ingredients, taking care not to break up the shrimp. Cover or wrap bowl and contents and marinate in refrigerator for at least an hour, preferably overnight, stirring once or twice.

Serving

Serve with "Town House" or other similar saltine crackers. Chablis or Sauterne goes well.