

Spirited Cooking

Clever Cooks' Secret Ingredient

(NAPSA)—Creative cooks are finding innovative new uses for a long-popular ingredient. Your first association with bourbon is probably that it's something to sip at get-togethers or when relaxing with friends, but bourbon adds sizzle and rich flavor where you might not expect. It's finding its way into more and more recipes, and many chefs and at-home cooks have already discovered it commands a place in the kitchen. Similar to brandy in flavor, bourbon can be used in a variety of recipes. Each individual brand of bourbon has distinctive characteristics of age, proof and, of course, taste.

Bourbon is aged in charred oak barrels, which over time impart the copper color and caramel flavors. Often, the longer the bourbon ages, the more flavorful and rich it tastes. Because of the vanilla and deep caramel flavor, bourbon is most commonly used to flavor confections and desserts like bread puddings. It is also a staple in many guarded family barbecue sauce recipes, adding a woody and slightly smoky flavor. Now bourbon is turning up in a new crop of main dishes and appetizers. The recipe below calls for a small amount of bourbon, making it burst with big flavor.

Spiced Shrimp With Ridgemont Reserve 1792 Bourbon

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 shallot, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 24 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ½ cup Ridgemont Reserve 1792 small-batch bourbon
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon green peppercorns, crushed
- 1 teaspoon Creole seasoning
- 8 slices toasted sandwich bread, crusts removed and

- sliced diagonally in half
- Fresh baby spinach
- Grape tomatoes
- Sliced green onion



1. Melt butter in a hot skillet until slightly browned.
2. Add the shallots and garlic; sauté 30 seconds.
3. Add the shrimp and cook over medium-high heat, turning once, until done, about 3-4 minutes.
4. Remove the shrimp from the skillet and keep warm.
5. Remove the skillet from heat and add bourbon.
6. Return the skillet to heat and cook until reduced by two thirds of its original volume.
7. Add cream, crushed green peppercorns and Creole seasoning.
8. Gently boil sauce until reduced to 1 cup.

To serve:

Arrange 2 toast points on each plate. Place 3 shrimp over toast points. Spoon sauce over shrimp; sprinkle with sliced green onion. Garnish with baby spinach and grape tomatoes, if desired. Serves 8.

This recipe was provided by Kentucky-based restaurant owners the Castro Brothers and the Kentucky Bourbon Festival.