

Low Country Boil Recipe

If you are looking for a meal that doubles as a social event, the Low Country Boil is the answer. Originating from the coastal regions of South Carolina and Georgia, this one-pot wonder—sometimes called Frogmore Stew—is a celebration of fresh seafood and simple, bold flavors. It is a communal feast where shrimp, spicy sausage, sweet corn, and tender potatoes are boiled together in a seasoned broth, then dumped onto a newspaper-covered table for everyone to dig in with their hands. This recipe captures the essence of Southern hospitality: unpretentious, abundant, and incredibly delicious. It is the ultimate summer gathering meal that minimizes cleanup while maximizing fun.

Why You'll Love This Recipe

Perfect for Large Gatherings

The Low Country Boil is designed to feed a crowd. It scales up effortlessly; whether you are feeding four people or forty, the process remains the same—just use a bigger pot. It eliminates the need for individual plating, formal table settings, or multiple courses. The interactive nature of peeling shrimp and eating corn off the cob breaks down barriers and encourages conversation. It is a relaxed, festive way to dine that puts guests at ease immediately, making it perfect for backyard barbecues, beach trips, or holiday weekends.

Old Bay Seasoning Highlights

The distinct flavor profile of this dish comes from the generous use of crab boil seasoning, typically Old Bay. This blend of celery salt, black pepper, crushed red pepper flakes, and paprika infuses the water and penetrates every ingredient with a savory, slightly spicy kick. It complements the sweetness of the corn and the shrimp perfectly. The seasoning doesn't just coat the outside; because the ingredients boil in the spiced water, the flavor is absorbed deep into the potatoes and sausage, ensuring every bite is zesty and seasoned to perfection.

07 a Sheet Pan Shrimp Img 3

Classic Low Country Boil



Aaron recipes

A festive one-pot feast featuring shrimp, sausage, corn, and potatoes seasoned with Old Bay. Perfect for summer gatherings and easy cleanup.

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Prep Time 15 minutes mins

Cook Time 25 minutes mins

Total Time 40 minutes mins

Course Dinner, Main Course
Cuisine American Southern

Servings 6 servings
Calories 580 kcal

Equipment

- Large Stockpot (12qt+)
- Colander

Ingredients

- 4 quarts Water
- 1 bottle Beer (optional, lager style)
- 1/2 cup Old Bay Seasoning
- 1.5 lbs Red potatoes, small or halved
- 1.5 lbs Smoked sausage (Andouille or Kielbasa), cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 ears Corn on the cob, shucked and halved
- 2 lbs Shrimp, large, shell-on and deveined
- 2 whole Lemons, halved

Instructions

1. Fill a very large pot with water and beer (if using). Add Old Bay seasoning and squeeze in the lemons, dropping the rinds into the pot.
2. Bring mixture to a rolling boil over high heat.
3. Add potatoes carefully. Cook for 10-12 minutes until they start to soften.
4. Add the smoked sausage and corn pieces. Cook for another 10 minutes.
5. Add the shrimp. Cook for 2-3 minutes max, just until shrimp turn pink and opaque.
6. Drain immediately. Pour contents onto a paper-covered table or large platter. Dust with extra seasoning if desired.

Notes

Add ingredients in stages to prevent overcooking the shrimp. Serve with melted butter and cocktail sauce.

Keyword low country boil recipe, seafood boil, shrimp boil

Ingredient Highlights & Substitutions

Essential Ingredients

You need four main pillars for a classic boil: red potatoes, smoked sausage (like Andouille or Kielbasa), corn on the cob, and fresh shrimp. Red potatoes are ideal because their waxy texture holds up well to boiling without falling apart. Andouille sausage adds a necessary smoky, garlicky depth that perfumes the entire pot. Fresh ears of corn, broken into halves or thirds, provide crunch and sweetness. Finally, large, shell-on shrimp are the jewel of the dish; cooking them in the shell keeps them juicy and flavorful.

Smart Substitutions

If you cannot find Andouille sausage, any smoked sausage or polish kielbasa works well; turkey sausage is a leaner option that still tastes great. For the seafood, you can add crab legs, crawfish, or clams depending on your budget and availability. If you are watching your sodium intake, look for low-sodium Cajun seasoning blends or make your own spice mix to control the salt level. For a low-carb version, you can swap the potatoes for cauliflower florets or radishes, though you will need to adjust the cooking time significantly as they cook faster.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Prep Phase

Preparation is minimal but important. Scrub your potatoes clean; you can leave them whole if they are small, or halve them if they are large. Shuck the corn and break the ears into 3-inch pieces. Slice the smoked sausage into one-inch rounds. Rinse your shrimp under cold water. If using a traditional outdoor propane burner, get your large stockpot ready. If cooking indoors, a large soup pot (at least 8-12 quarts) on the stove works perfectly. Fill the pot halfway with water and squeeze in lemons, tossing the rinds into the water for extra citrusy brightness.

Cooking Phase

Bring the seasoned water to a rolling boil. Add the potatoes first, as they take the longest to cook. Let them boil for about 10-15 minutes. Next, add the sausage and corn, cooking for another 10 minutes. The timing is crucial to ensure everything finishes at the same time. Finally, add the shrimp. Shrimp cook very quickly—usually in just 2 to 3 minutes. As soon as they turn pink and opaque, drain the entire pot immediately. Leaving them in the hot water will cause the shrimp to become rubbery and tough.

Pro Tips for Perfect Results

Technique Secrets

Layering ingredients by cooking time is the secret to a perfect boil. If you dump everything in at once, your shrimp will be rubbery bullets by the time the potatoes are tender. Use a timer and add ingredients in stages: Potatoes first, then meat/veg, then seafood. Another pro tip is to sprinkle extra seasoning over the drained food while it is still steaming. The steam helps the spice adhere to the shells and skins, delivering an extra burst of flavor when you start eating.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Overcooking the shrimp is the cardinal sin of a Low Country Boil. Remember that they will continue to cook slightly from residual heat even after draining. Watch them like a hawk; as soon as they curl into a “C” shape, they are done. If they curl into an “O”, they are overcooked. Also, do not be shy with the salt and seasoning in the water. Potatoes and corn absorb a lot of salt, so the water should taste almost like seawater to season them properly from the inside out.

Serving Ideas & Pairings

Presentation & Plating

Forget the fine china. The traditional way to serve this is to cover a picnic table with butcher paper or newspapers and dump the strained pot directly onto the center of the table. Provide plenty of paper towels, empty bowls for shells, and maybe some wet wipes. Place bowls of melted butter, cocktail sauce, and lemon wedges around the pile for dipping. This communal style is fun and makes cleanup as easy as rolling up the paper and throwing it away.

Pairing Suggestions

Since the boil is heavy on protein and starch, light and acidic sides work best. A creamy coleslaw or a vinegar-based cucumber salad provides a cool, crisp contrast to the warm, spicy seafood. Cold beer is the beverage of choice, specifically lagers or pilsners that cut through the spice. For non-alcoholic options, sweet iced tea with plenty of lemon is the classic Southern accompaniment that balances the heat of the Old Bay seasoning.

If you enjoy seafood dishes like this, you might also like our [Creamy Chicken Pasta](#) for a different kind of savory comfort meal.

Nutrition Facts

Nutrient	Amount	% Daily Value
Calories	580 kcal	29%
Protein	42 g	84%
Carbohydrates	45 g	15%
Fat	26 g	40%
Saturated Fat	9 g	45%
Cholesterol	280 mg	93%
Sodium	1450 mg	63%

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make this on the stovetop?

Absolutely. While often made outdoors, a large stockpot on a kitchen stove works perfectly. Just ensure your pot is large enough (8 quarts or more) to hold the water and ingredients without boiling over. If you don't have a huge pot, you can halve the recipe.

How do I reheat leftovers?

Reheating seafood can be tricky. The best method is to steam the leftovers gently in a pot with a little water or broth just until heated through. Microwaving tends to make the shrimp rubbery. You can also chop up the leftovers and sauté them for a delicious hash the next morning.

Do I have to peel the shrimp first?

Tradition dictates leaving the shell on. It protects the delicate meat from overcooking and adds flavor to the boil. It also slows down the eating process, making the meal more social. However, if you prefer convenience, you can use peeled and deveined shrimp, but reduce the cooking time to just 1-2 minutes.

Conclusion

The Low Country Boil is a culinary experience that brings people together. It is loud, messy, and incredibly satisfying—everything a good summer meal should be. By combining simple, fresh ingredients with bold spices and a communal eating style, you create memories that last long after the food is gone. Whether you are on the coast or in your own kitchen, this recipe transports you to the South with every spicy, savory bite. So spread out the newspaper, invite your friends, and get ready to feast.