

Velvety Crab and Shrimp Soup

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Hands on time: 30 minutes

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1-lb medium shrimp with shells, shells reserved and shrimp chopped
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 cup dry sherry
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- Two 8-oz bottles clam juice (2 cups)
- 1 1/2 cups half and half
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Pinch cayenne
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8-oz jumbo lump crab meat, drained
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh chives

Method

Heat a large pot over medium-high heat and add the vegetable oil. When the oil shimmers add the shrimp shells, onion, garlic, carrot, celery and sauté for 3 minutes or until the shells turn bright orange and the onion begins to soften. Stir in the bay leaf, tomato paste and flour and cook for another minute, stirring, or until the paste has browned on the bottom of the pan. Pour in the sherry, broth and clam juice and bring to a simmer scraping up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes so that the flavors can mingle.

Strain the broth through a wire mesh sieve into a clean pot and discard the shells and vegetables. Stir in the half and half, heavy cream, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and cayenne. Bring to a bare

simmer and stir in the shrimp and crab. Cook for another 3 minutes or until the shrimp is firm and cooked through (don't let it boil or shrimp will be tough). Taste and season with salt, pepper and more lemon juice, Worcestershire or cayenne to taste.

Ladle into heated bowls and garnish with chives. Serve hot.

In the glass: Any Spanish cava would be a great pairing with this rich soup. If you're not feeling the bubbly try your favorite Chardonnay. The butterier the better.