Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes
Total Time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4 (about 20-24 shrimp)

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Introduction

There is something irresistibly satisfying about biting into a piece of shrimp encased in a shatteringly crisp, golden-brown crust. These Breaded Shrimp are the perfect appetizer for parties, a fun family dinner, or a restaurant-quality treat made right at home. With a seasoned Panko coating and juicy, tender shrimp inside, this recipe delivers that classic crunch without the greasiness of heavy deep-frying.

Whether you choose to fry them, bake them, or air fry them, the result is the same: a flavorful, crowd-pleasing dish that comes together in under 30 minutes. Serve them with a tangy cocktail sauce, creamy tartar sauce, or a squeeze of fresh lemon, and watch them disappear before they even hit the table. This recipe is simple enough for a weeknight but

impressive enough for entertaining.

Ingredients

For the Shrimp:

- 1 lb large raw shrimp (21-25 count), peeled and deveined, tails on (optional)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, for heat)

For the Breading Station:

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- 1 ½ cups Panko breadcrumbs

- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Cooking spray or vegetable oil (for frying or air frying)

For the Dipping Sauces (Optional):

- Cocktail sauce
- Tartar sauce
- Spicy mayo (mayo + sriracha)
- Fresh lemon wedges

Equipment

- Three shallow bowls (for the breading station)

- Large skillet or deep fryer (if frying)
- Air fryer or baking sheet with wire rack (if air frying or baking)
- Paper towels
- Tongs
- Instant-read thermometer (optional)

Instructions

Phase 1: Prep the Shrimp (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Clean the Shrimp: If your shrimp are not already peeled and deveined, do so now. Leave the tails on for easy dipping and a classic look, or remove them if you prefer.
2. Pat Dry: Pat the shrimp thoroughly dry with paper towels. This is a crucial step—moisture prevents the breading from adhering properly and leads to a soggy coating.
3. Season: In a medium bowl, toss the shrimp with salt, black pepper, garlic powder, smoked paprika, and cayenne (if using). Set aside.

Phase 2: Set Up the Breading Station (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

Arrange three shallow bowls in a row:

1. Bowl 1 (Flour): Add the all-purpose flour.

2. Bowl 2 (Egg Wash): Beat the eggs with 1 tablespoon of water until well combined.

3. Bowl 3 (Panko Coating): Combine the Panko breadcrumbs, grated Parmesan, dried parsley, salt, and pepper. Mix well.

Phase 3: Bread the Shrimp (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Dredge: Working with one shrimp at a time, roll it in the flour, shaking off any excess. This helps the egg wash stick.

2. Egg Wash: Dip the floured shrimp into the beaten eggs, ensuring it is fully coated.

3. Coat: Press the shrimp firmly into the Panko mixture, coating all sides. Use your fingers to gently press the crumbs onto the shrimp so they adhere well.

4. Rest: Place the breaded shrimp on a plate or wire rack. Let them rest for 5-10 minutes before cooking. This helps the coating set and prevents it from falling off during cooking.

Phase 4: Cooking the Shrimp (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: High)

Option A: Pan-Frying (Recommended for Best Crunch)

1. Heat about ½ inch of vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C). To test, drop a Panko crumb in—it should sizzle immediately.

2. Carefully place the breaded shrimp in the hot oil in batches, being careful not to overcrowd the pan.

3. Fry for 1.5 to 2 minutes per side until golden brown and crispy. The shrimp cook very quickly—do not overcook them.

4. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain excess oil.

Option B: Air Frying (Lighter Option)

1. Preheat the air fryer to 400°F (200°C) for 3 minutes.

2. Lightly spray the air fryer basket with cooking oil. Arrange the breaded shrimp in a single layer, not touching. Spray the tops lightly with oil.

3. Air fry for 4 minutes, flip, and cook for another 2-3 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.

Option C: Baking (Oven Method)

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Place a wire rack on a baking sheet and spray with cooking oil.

2. Arrange the breaded shrimp on the rack and spray the tops lightly with oil.

3. Bake for 10-12 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden and crispy.

Phase 5: Serving (Time: 2 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Plate: Arrange the shrimp on a serving platter.

2. Garnish: Sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

3. Dip: Serve immediately with cocktail sauce, tartar sauce, or your favorite dipping sauce.

Flavor Variations

- Coconut Shrimp: Replace half the Panko with shredded coconut. Serve with a sweet chili or pineapple dipping sauce.

- Spicy Buffalo: Add ½ teaspoon of cayenne to the flour and toss the cooked shrimp in buffalo sauce after frying.

- Italian Style: Add 1 teaspoon of Italian seasoning and extra Parmesan to the Panko mixture. Serve with marinara.

- Gluten-Free: Use gluten-free flour and gluten-free Panko breadcrumbs.

- Garlic Butter: After cooking, toss the shrimp in melted butter with minced garlic and fresh parsley.

Nutrition

Note: Nutritional information is an estimate based on pan-fried preparation with standard ingredients and does not include dipping sauces.

Serving Size: 5-6 shrimp
Calories: 290
Total Fat: 11g
Saturated Fat: 3g
Cholesterol: 195mg
Sodium: 720mg
Total Carbohydrates: 20g
Dietary Fiber: 1g
Sugars: 1g
Protein: 26g