- Prep Time: 20 Minutes
- Cook Time: 5 Minutes (plus cooling)
- Chill Time: 1 Hour
- Total Time: 1 Hour 25 Minutes
- Yield: 4 Servings
- Intensity Level: Low to Medium (Knife skills required)

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Ingredients

The Shrimp & Poaching Liquid

- 1 lb (450g) Large raw shrimp (21-25 count), peeled and deveined (tails removed or kept on for aesthetics)
- 1 small onion, quartered
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 tsp salt
- 6 cups water

The “Salsa” Base (The Cocktail Sauce)

- 1 cup Clamato juice (or tomato juice)
- ½ cup ketchup

- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 2-3 limes)
- 2 tbsp hot sauce (Valentina or Tapatío preferred)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- ½ tsp black pepper

The Vegetables & Garnish

- 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and finely diced
- 1 medium tomato, seeded and finely diced
- ½ small red onion, finely minced
- 1-2 serrano or jalapeño peppers, minced (seeds removed for less heat)
- 1 ripe avocado, diced (for garnish)
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

- Lime wedges (for serving)

- Saltine crackers or Tostadas (for serving)

Instructions: Step-by-Step

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

1. Boil the Water: In a medium saucepan, combine the 6 cups of water, quartered onion, bay leaf, smashed garlic, and 1 teaspoon of salt. Bring to a rolling boil over high heat.

2. Cook: Once boiling, add the peeled and deveined shrimp. Immediately turn off the heat. The residual heat of the water will cook the shrimp perfectly without making them rubbery.

3. Monitor: Let the shrimp sit in the hot water for exactly 2 to 3 minutes. They are done when they turn opaque and pink. Do not overcook.

4. Ice Bath (Crucial Step): While the shrimp are cooking, prepare a large bowl of ice water. As soon as the shrimp are pink, use a slotted spoon to transfer them immediately to the ice bath. This stops the cooking process and ensures a snappy texture.

5. Chop: Once cool, remove the shrimp from the ice bath. If you kept the tails on, you can leave them for presentation. Cut the shrimp into bite-sized pieces (halves or thirds,

depending on size). Set aside in the fridge.

Phase 2: The Cocktail Base (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Mix the Liquids: In a large non-reactive bowl (glass or ceramic), whisk together the Clamato juice, ketchup, fresh lime juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and pepper.

2. Taste Test: This is the most important step. Dip a spoon into the mixture. It should be tart, savory, and slightly spicy. If it feels too thick, add a splash more Clamato. If it needs more zing, add lime. If it needs depth, add a dash more Worcestershire. Adjust to your palate.

3. Chill: Place the bowl in the refrigerator to keep it cold while you chop the vegetables.

Phase 3: The Vegetable Prep (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Note: This is the most labor-intensive part of the recipe, requiring knife skills.

1. Dice the Cucumber: Peel the cucumber. Slice it in half lengthwise and use a spoon to scrape out the watery seeds. Discard seeds. Dice the flesh into small, uniform cubes (about ¼ inch).

2. Dice the Tomato: Cut the tomato in half and squeeze out the seeds and pulp (this prevents the cocktail from becoming too watery). Dice the firm flesh.

3. Mince the Onion & Chili: Finely mince the red onion and the serrano pepper. If you want a milder cocktail, remove the seeds and veins from the pepper.

4. Combine: Add the cucumber, tomato, onion, and chili to the chilled Clamato mixture.

5. Add Shrimp: Gently fold in the chopped shrimp. Stir in the chopped cilantro.

Phase 4: The Chill (Time: 1 Hour | Intensity: None)

1. Marinate: Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place it in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour. This allows the flavors to meld. The shrimp will absorb the lime and tomato flavors, and the vegetables will soften slightly.

2. *Pro Tip:* Do not add the avocado yet, or it will brown and get mushy.

Phase 5: Service & Presentation (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Stir: Give the mixture a good stir. The salt draws moisture out of the vegetables, so the liquid level might have risen.

2. Serve: Ladle the mixture into large glass goblets or tall glasses. Make sure to get plenty of liquid and solids in each serving.

3. Garnish: Top with freshly diced avocado and a sprig of cilantro. Serve with a lime wedge

on the rim and a side of Saltine crackers or crispy tostadas.

Recipe Notes & Tips

The “Intensity” of Flavor:
This recipe is balanced, but the “intensity” of the heat and acidity is entirely in your hands. If you are serving a crowd, it is best to err on the side of mild (less hot sauce and remove the chili seeds) and allow guests to add their own heat.

The Clamato Factor:
If you cannot find Clamato (a tomato and clam juice blend), you can use plain tomato juice, but you will lose some of that authentic savory “umami” depth. If using plain tomato juice, consider adding a teaspoon of fish sauce or soy sauce to mimic that seafood salinity.

Why Ice Bath?
Shrimp continue to cook in their own heat. If you simply drain them and let them sit in a colander, the residual heat will tighten the proteins, making them chewy. The ice bath shocks them, locking in the texture.

Nutritional Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional values are estimates and will vary based on specific brands and ingredient sizes.

Serving Size: 1 Large Glass (approx. 1/4 of recipe)
Calories: 240 kcal
Protein: 26g

Carbohydrates: 14g
Dietary Fiber: 4g
Sugars: 8g
Fat: 9g (Mostly from the avocado)
Saturated Fat: 1.5g
Cholesterol: 185mg
Sodium: 980mg (Depends heavily on the hot sauce and ketchup used)