

BY HOPE S. PHILBRICK

Something's missing within the 1,136 pages of "Joy of Cooking." The culinary bible lacks the recipe for shrimp and grits, a rather shocking omission from the notorious go-to guide. Many Atlanta restaurants include the Southern cuisine staple in their repertoire, and we're pretty sure they're not hurting for the recipe.

Grits are a staple of Southern cuisine. Shrimp and grits originated in the Low Country of South Carolina as a common breakfast enjoyed by fishermen. But for many Southerners, the dish is a taste of nostalgia. In Georgia, we have access to some of the sweetest shrimp.

"Georgia wild shrimp is from really pristine salt marshes," says John A. Wallace, president of the Georgia Shrimp Association. "Ours has a unique taste without the iodine taste common to Gulf shrimp or the really bland taste of pond-raised."

The combination of sweet shrimp and hearty grits make for a satisfying plate, but several Atlanta-area restaurants go beyond the basics to serve up a wonderful variety of recipe interpretations.

BUCKHEAD DINER

Chef Joey Riley uses Georgia stone ground grits, homemade sausage and Parmesan cheese in his recipe. It's available for \$12.95 during Sunday brunch and by request. www.buckheadrestaurants.com.

CORNER CAFÉ

Chef Greg Sears' recipe features barbecue shrimp with sweet onions over chorizo and white cheddar grits. It's on the weekend brunch menu for \$15. www.buckheadrestaurants.com.

THE CLUBHOUSE RESTAURANT

Chef Stacie Meehan pairs Bourbon shrimp with jalapeño white cheddar grits. The dish is \$26 when available as a featured special. 404-442-8891.

EINSTEIN'S

This preparation includes roasted red peppers, caramelized onions and a sherry reduction. It's \$12 on the weekend brunch menu. www.metrocafes.com.

THE FEED STORE

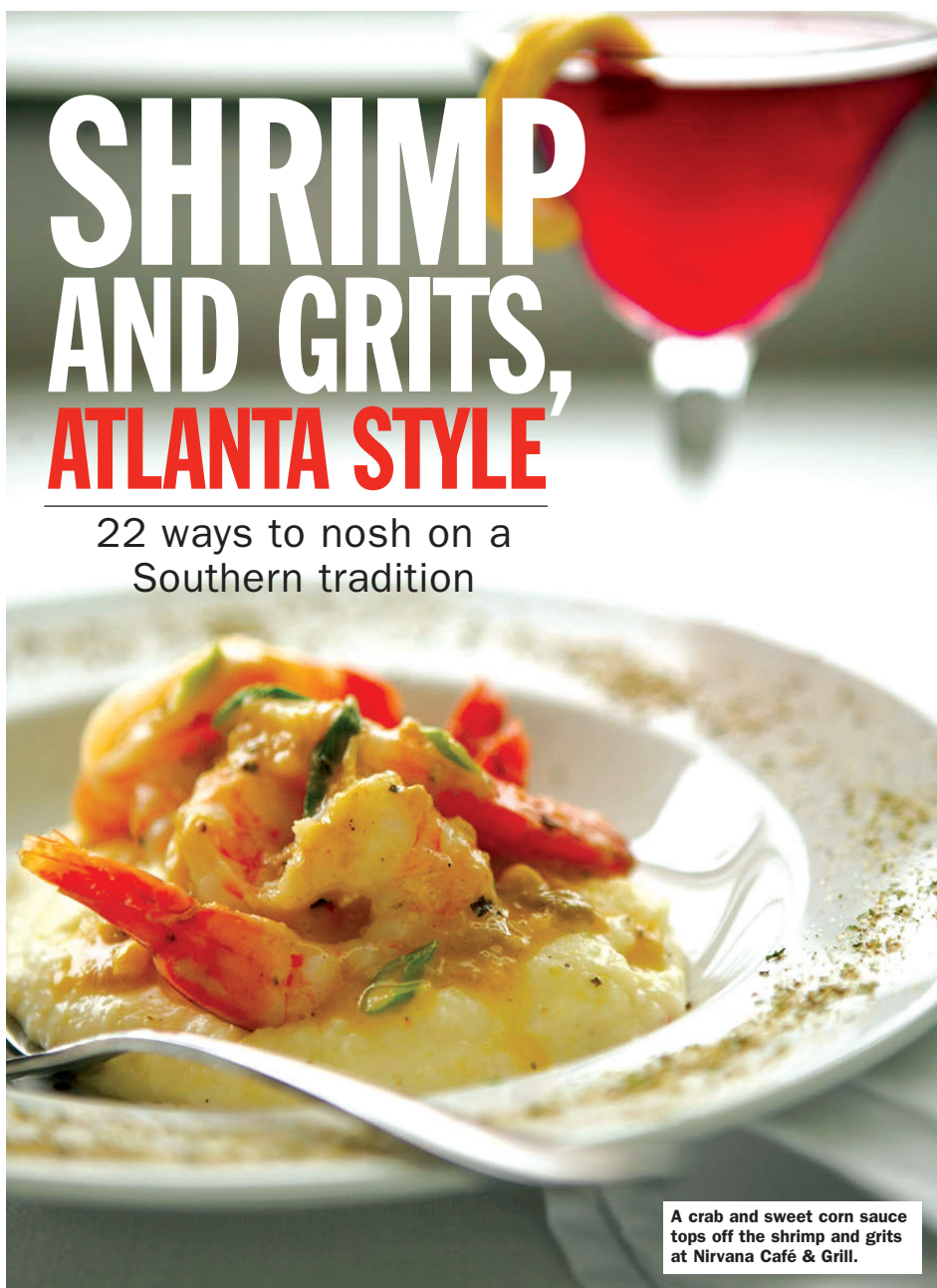
Chef Peter Golaszewski pairs white shrimp with sun-dried tomato grits, collard greens and applewood bacon. The dish is \$13 at lunch, \$20 for dinner. 404-209-7979.

FLYING BISCUIT CAFÉ

Founder Delia Champion's recipe adds carrots and basil for sweetness to balance the spice. It's available all day for \$11.95. www.flyingbiscuit.com.

FOOD 101—MORNINGSIDE

Chef Ron Eyester's recipe features Georgia



SHRIMP AND GRITS, ATLANTA STYLE

22 ways to nosh on a Southern tradition

A crab and sweet corn sauce tops off the shrimp and grits at Nirvana Café & Grill.

NIRVANA CAFÉ & GRILL

shrimp, andouille sausage, caramelized onions and San Marzano tomato gravy. Enjoy at dinner for \$18. www.101concepts.com.

GARRISON'S BROILER & TAP

Sautéed shrimp, andouille sausage, mixed peppers, corn and tomatoes in red chili cream sauce are served atop Logan Farms grits at lunch and dinner for \$17. www.metrocafes.com.

LOWCOUNTRY BARBECUE OUTPOST

Sweet white corn adds texture to the creamy yellow stone ground grits. It's on the Sunday brunch menu at \$9.95 for an entrée and \$2.49 as a side dish. www.outpostbbq.com.

MILTON'S CUISINE & COCKTAILS

Chef Jay Pollock's recipe includes applewood smoked bacon, mushrooms and lemon beurre blanc. It's on the dinner menu for \$14. www.miltons-atl.com.

MUSS & TURNER'S

Chef Ryan Hiding uses domestic shrimp and stone ground grits from Riverview Farms in Ranger, Ga., plus arugula and bacon. The menu changes routinely, but it's often \$11.53 at dinner. www.mussandturners.com.

NIRVANA CAFÉ & GRILLE

Chef Justin Mason pairs shrimp sautéed in white wine, garlic and spice with pepper jack grits and tops it all off with a crab and sweet corn sauce. It's on the dinner menu for \$13.95. www.eatnirvana.com.

PARK 75 AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

For \$16, enjoy a smoked Gouda shrimp-and-grits tamale with Tasso gravy as an appetizer. www.fourseasons.com/atlanta.

PRIME MERIDIAN AT 100 CNN CENTER AT THE OMNI HOTEL

Chef Geoff Southwick presents shrimp and grits with crisp phyllo wafers stacked in a

tower, topped with a lobster claw, caviar and chervil and drizzled with lobster cognac and sweet basil oil. The appetizer is \$10. www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/AtlantaCNNCenter/Dining.aspx.

RELISH

Chef Andy Badgett's shrimp-and-grits recipe features Tasso gravy. It's \$11.95 for lunch and Sunday brunch, \$12.95 for dinner. www.relishgoodfood.com.

REPAST RESTAURANT

Owner/chef Joe Truex uses poached Georgia shrimp, bacon, grits and a poached egg. It's on the dinner menu for \$26. www.repastrestaurant.com.

SHAUN'S

Chef Shaun Doty adds a poached organic egg, Tasso ham and creole sauce to his dinner version, available for \$18. The \$14 brunch version includes a slab of bacon and a poached egg. www.shaunsrestaurant.com.

SOUTH CITY KITCHEN

Sautéed shrimp and scallops are paired with creamy stone-ground grits and garlic gravy. Served for brunch and lunch (Midtown only) at \$15.75 and for dinner at \$18.50.

SWEET LOWDOWN

Chef Paul Wooten uses creamy grits, Tasso ham gravy and chicken sausage. It's on the dinner menu for \$21. www.thesweetlowdown.com.

THE SUN DIAL RESTAURANT, BAR & VIEW

Chef Christian Messier creates a stone ground grits cake topped with red eye gravy, sweet corn cream and rock shrimp ragout. It's available as a dinner appetizer for \$14. www.sundialrestaurant.com.

TRILOGY

Chef Michael O'Ryan uses white cheddar grits, succotash and tomato confit. It's \$18.95 at dinner. www.trilogydining.net.

WATERSHED

Chef Scott Peacock pairs creamy stone ground shrimp grits with a Pullman plank. It's a \$9 appetizer on the dinner menu. www.watershedrestaurant.com. **SP**

SHRIMP AND GRITS: THE WILD GEORGIA SHRIMP FESTIVAL

Can't get enough shrimp and grits? Head to the second annual Shrimp & Grits: The Wild Georgia Shrimp Festival, which runs Sept. 14-16 in Jekyll Island's historic district. The culinary event includes cooking competitions, shrimping excursions, the chance to explore a docked shrimp boat, tasty preparations of fresh wild Georgia shrimp by local chefs, musical entertainment, children's activities, a vendor area showcasing arts and crafts, and the inaugural Wild Georgia Golf Tournament. Most activities are free. www.jekyllisland.com/shrimppandgrits.