Shrimp & Grits

6 Tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, divided

1 C quick-cooking (5-minute) grits, such as Quaker

2 ¼ C whole milk

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 ½ lbs (20-count) shrimp, peeled and shelled reserved (see tip)

1 teaspoon tomato paste

2 slices thick-cut bacon, cut in ½-inch pieces, such as Nodine’s

1 teaspoon minced garlic

2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 Tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ teaspoon Sriracha or Tabasco

4 scallions, white and green parts, thinly sliced diagonally

For the grits, melt 1 Tablespoon of the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the grits and cook or 3 minutes, stirring often. Add the milk, 2 C water, and 1 teaspoon salt and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover, and simmer for 25 minutes, whisking occasionally to be sure the grits don’t get lumpy. Off the heat, stir in the 2 tablespoons of the butter, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cover and set aside to keep warm.

Meanwhile, heat 1 Tablespoon of the butter in a large (12-inch) sauté pan over medium heat. Add the shrimp shells and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the shells are lightly browned. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 30 seconds. Add 2 C water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain the liquid into a bowl, then pour into a glass measuring cup. Discard the shells and add enough water to make 1 ½ C of stock. Set aside. Wipe out the sauté pan with a paper towel, add the bacon, and cook over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes, until crisp. Stir in the shrimp, garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper and cook for 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside. Melt 1 Tablespoon of the butter in the pan, whisk in the flour, and cook for 1 minute. Whisk in the stock, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 5 minutes, until thickened. Return the shrimp mixture to the pan, cover, and cook over medium heat for 3 minutes, until the shrimp are cooked through. Off the heat, stir in the lemon juice, Sriracha, and the remaining Tablespoon of butter.

Serve large puddles of grits in large shallow bowls, spoon the shrimp and sauce on top, sprinkle with scallions, salt, and pepper and serve hot.

Tip: Grocery stores and seafood ships refer to shrimp differently. Labels such as ”large” and “extra-large” can be arbitrary. Order shrimp by the count per pound, rather than the size.