

CURRIED OKRA WITH CHICKPEAS AND TOMATOES

SERVES 4 (MAIN COURSE) OR 6 (SIDE DISH)

Active time: 20 min Start to finish: 35 min

- 1¼ lb small fresh okra, left untrimmed, or 2 (10-oz) packages frozen whole okra (not thawed)
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 teaspoons finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 (14- to 15-oz) can whole tomatoes in juice, tomatoes chopped, reserving juice
- 1 (19-oz) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed (2 cups)
- ¾ cup water
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

Accompaniment: cinnamon-spiced rice (page 158) or basmati rice

► If using fresh okra, trim, leaving tops intact, being careful not to cut into pods.

► Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then sauté onion and garlic with ginger and curry powder, stirring, 2 minutes. Add tomatoes with their juice, chickpeas, and water and boil, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 3 minutes. Stir in okra, salt, and pepper and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until okra is tender, about 10 minutes.

ALMOND-CRUSTED SHRIMP CAKES WITH LEMON SOY MAYONNAISE

SERVES 4 (MAIN COURSE) OR 8 (FIRST COURSE)

Active time: 45 min Start to finish: 55 min

For lemon soy mayonnaise

- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- 1½ teaspoons soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon finely grated fresh lemon zest (see Tips, page 267)
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon hot sauce, or to taste

For shrimp cakes

- 1 bacon slice, chopped
- ¾ lb large shrimp in shell (21 to 25 per lb), peeled and deveined
- 1 slice firm white sandwich bread
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup chopped scallions (about 4)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups sliced almonds (6 oz)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil

Garnish: lemon wedges and fresh cilantro leaves

Make lemon soy mayonnaise:

► Stir together all mayonnaise ingredients in a small bowl. Chill until ready to serve.

Make shrimp cakes:

► Pulse chopped bacon in food processor until finely chopped. Pat shrimp dry, then add to bacon and pulse just until shrimp is coarsely chopped (do not purée). Soak bread in milk in a shallow bowl until very soft, about 30 seconds. Add wet bread to shrimp mixture, discarding any remaining milk, and pulse until just combined.

► Transfer shrimp mixture to a bowl, then stir in scallions, cilantro, cornstarch, salt, sugar, and pepper until combined well.

► Spread almonds on a large plate. Using a ¼-cup measure, drop 1 mound of shrimp mixture onto almonds. Sprinkle almonds over shrimp mound to coat, gently pressing to form a (3½-inch) cake (½ inch thick). Transfer cake to a wax-paper-lined baking sheet. Make 7 more cakes in same manner, transferring to baking sheet. Discard any remaining almonds.

► Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then cook 4 cakes, turning over once and rotating for even browning, until almonds are golden and cakes are just cooked through, 4 to 6 minutes total. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate and keep warm, loosely covered with foil. Discard any almonds left in skillet, then add remaining tablespoon oil and cook remaining 4 cakes in same manner. Serve warm, with lemon soy mayonnaise.

For more EVERY DAY recipes, see page 152.

Wrapped in a coating of almonds, panfried shrimp cakes become nutty-crisp on the outside while staying moist and sweet within.

