

**SHRIMP ROCKET FELLOW ‡**

Perhaps the most famous recipe bearing the Rockefeller cognomen is that created in 1899 at Antoine's Restaurant in New Orleans. I remember forgoing a river ride on the Creole Queen Paddlewheeler with the rest of the family in order to dine at Antoine's for the first time and try this renowned preparation. The dish was named after John D. Rockefeller, the richest American at the time, for the richness of its sauce. Though the original recipe is a secret, the sauce is known to be a purée of a number of green vegetables other than spinach. A 1986 laboratory analysis by author and sceptic William Poundstone as published in his book, *Bigger Secrets*, indicated that the primary ingredients were parsley, puréed celery, scallions, olive oil, and capers. I must say that I was delighted in the experience, but somewhat disappointed in the taste. To me, whatever the secret recipe contained, it just did not fit my palate the way I had hoped. It would have been better had they made it with spinach, I thought.

While perhaps being of less renown, knock-off versions of the dish using shrimp are quite frequently found in restaurants and homes in New Orleans and Southern Louisiana; even the Red Lobster restaurant chain has a rendition. I don't know when these began to appear, but I found a recipe for it in a 1968 newspaper. I must say that all those I have eaten were all excellent, but many didn't have the rich sauce implied by the Rockefeller appellation. Some were served in conch shells, some in ramekins, some on mushroom caps, some on toast points, and some in casserole form. Some contained rice, most had bacon.

In my version, below, I have combined a rich, flavorful sauce with greens, shrimp, bacon<sup>1</sup>, and cheese into an hors d'oeuvre befitting its name. In my book (and this is my book) it is better than Oysters Rockefeller! I thus felt compelled to add my own designation to its

<sup>1</sup>Nature's most perfect food!

title. A glass of cold Sauvignon Blanc goes very well with this dish.

**1 tbsp olive oil**  
**½ cup scallions, chopped finely**  
**2 cloves garlic, smashed and minced**  
**¼ cup celery, chopped finely**  
**1 10 oz package frozen spinach**  
**1 oz medium dry sherry**  
**1 tsp anise extract**  
**3 tbsp crisp crumbled bacon**  
**1 tbsp dried parsley flakes**  
**1 tsp tarragon leaves**  
**½ cup cream of shrimp soup (the thick kind, undiluted)**  
**¼ cup Swiss cheese, grated**  
**1 egg, beaten**  
**8 oz medium shrimp**  
**¼ cup Asiago cheese, grated**  
**¼ cup bread crumbs**  
**dashes of Tabasco® sauce**  
**teaspoons of lemon juice**  
**olive oil cooking spray**

In a medium saucepan, sauté the scallions, garlic, and celery in a little oil until they are limp. Thaw the spinach and press as much water out as feasible, add to the saucepan, add the sherry and anise extract, and cook until the mixture has lost its excess moisture. Add the bacon, parsley, and tarragon and mix well. Remove from the heat.

Add the cream of shrimp soup, Swiss cheese, and egg to the cooled greens mixture and mix well. Grease a non-stick muffin pan and coat each cup with bread crumbs. Divide the greens-sauce mixture equally among the cups of the pan and top each with a few shrimp. Mix the Asiago cheese and bread crumbs together and sprinkle evenly on top of the shrimp. Add a teaspoon of lemon juice and a dash of Tabasco® sauce to each cup, spray each with the olive oil, and bake, uncovered, in a preheated 375°F oven for 15 minutes. Let cool slightly and carefully remove

each individual appetizer to a serving tray.  
Bon appetit!

Makes about 8 servings.