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Shrimp + Garden Herbs = Summer

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Ssshhhh...I'm not going to say this too loud or the Weather Gods might hear, but I think our weather has finally turned from eternal rain to sun.

In the spring, a livelier palate changes on the burnish'd hearth
In the spring, a young cook's fancy, lightly turns to to thoughts of grill.

Apologies to Alfred Lloyd Tennyson, but as soon as the warm weather comes I want to eat things light and barely cooked. I want to eat things from the sea, I want to eat grilled shrimp, and linguine with clam sauce, and those little crabs that come from the Veneto. And I obsessivley go online to find a cheap place to stay at the beach. So I guess spring has sprung into summer here in Montone and it's about freakin' time.

This is how we celebrated the arrival of warm sunshine with a dish that could be a light meal of its own, or served as a finger licking starter:

Summer Broiled Shrimp and Fresh Herbs
500g or about 1 pound of whole shrimp
Fresh herbs: parsley, basil, sage, fennel fronds
Lemons
Olive Oil
Coarse Sea Salt

I like whole shrimp, which means they sill have their heads. The heads hold in the juices, and that makes for better flavor. If all you can get is decapitated shrimp, that's fine, but you'll need a bit more olive oil to keep things moist.

Prep the shrimp by laying it flat on your cutting surface, and using scissors, carefully cut the shell horizontally, along the length of the tail. Remove the top half of the tail shell, and leave the bottom length of the tail shell intact. This is a little bit more time consuming than totally shelling the shrimp tail, but its worth it because the remaining bottom half of the shell becomes the juice holder-inner.

Using a broiler proof dish, like a metal sizzle plate, line the plate with a 1/2" deep layer of coarse sea salt or kosher salt. Sea salt is cheap in Italy so I can use as much as I want. Kosher salt may be a better bet in places were 'sea salt' is a precious treat. [1]

Arrange the prepped shrimp on top of the salt and treat the fish to a fine drizzle of olive oil.

Finely chop your fresh herbs, whatever you have on hand, but make parsley the biggest presence in the herb bunch. Go easy on the rosemary, thyme, sage herbs as they pack a big flavor wallop, and can mask the shrimp flavor. One tiny clove of garlic couldn't hurt. If you have some fennel in the garden, snip some fronds to add to the mix. Set aside.

Broil the shrimp until done; hopefully you have a good broiler that really cranks out the heat because the faster you can do this, the better. Depending on the size of the shrimp and the broiler heat, this shouldn't take more than 4-5 minutes. I like to wait until I have some charred shell because I adore that smell.

As soon as the shrimp are done, add another tiny drizzle of olive oil, sprinkle with the fresh herbs and serve immediately with some cut up lemons.
Have paper napkins on hand, although this dish encourages lots of finger licking.

Its good to sit in the sun and eat shrimp! Now, if I could just find a cheap beach house.....

And in case you were wondering, I butchered Alfred Lloyd Tennyson's poem "Locksley Hall", where the 11th stanza goes like this:
In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Full poem here, [2]it's worth the moments it takes to read it.

Image (optional):

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