

LEMONY BARLEY WITH SHRIMP AND SPINACH

(inspired by a recipe from Fine Cooking)

1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined (save peels for stock)
1/2 large onion, skin on
1 lemon, cut in slices
salt and pepper to taste
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 onion, minced
1 stalk celery, minced
1 cup + 1/3 cup quick-cooking barley
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
3 cups fresh baby spinach leaves
1/4 cup black olives, pitted, cut in pieces
zest of 1 lemon

Make a shrimp stock simmering the shells with the half onion and lemon slices for about 30 minutes. Season it lightly with salt and pepper. Reserve. You will use about 2 cups of the stock to cook the barley.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil and saute the shrimp seasoned with a little salt until almost fully cooked. Remove and reserve, covered with foil. Add a little more oil if needed, and saute in the same pan the onion and celery until fragrant, seasoning lightly with salt and pepper.

Add the barley and stir until coated with the oil and veggie pieces. Add the lemon juice and cook, stirring, for 15 seconds. Pour in 2 cups of shrimp stock, 1/2 cup water and bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits in the pan. Reduce the heat to medium low, cover, and simmer until the barley is tender, 12 minutes.

Uncover the pan, add in the spinach and cook until wilted. Stir in the reserved shrimp, black olives, and lemon zest. Adjust seasoning if needed and serve right away.