



Frogmore Stew

Narrated by Stanley Woodward

1. Stewmaster Dennis Stormer prepares Frogmore stew (03:43)

<Video opens with Ervena Faulkner>

E. Faulkner: Lowcountry people are the ones who have always done this.

<Video shows Deborah Linyard>

D. Linyard: Everyone have their own secret ingredients.

<Video shows Janie Johnson Smalls>

J.J. Smalls: It's something we, uh, usually prepare when relatives are coming to visit.

<Video shows Dennis Stormer with a container full of celery and lemons>

D. Stormer: We just got some seasonings here: some lemons and some celery. All the ingredients they are fresh.

<Video shows Janie Johnson Smalls>

J.J. Smalls: Those-our relatives coming from the north, they love boiled shrimp a lot.

<Video shows a bowl full of corn>

D. Stormer: And we got our corn here and some nice fresh white potatoes, with the red skin. That usually [adds] a better flavor.

<Video shows Janie Johnson Smalls>

J.J. Smalls: And the last thing we would add will be the shrimp.

<Video shows a container full of shrimp and then Dennis Stormer>

D. Stormer: Nice and delicious, from the lowcountry. So we're gonna add all these ingredients and of course, the potatoes usually take the longest, because you don't add the shrimp first as Ms. Smalls was saying, because you don't want them to get mushy, you want them to be, you know, nice and a good consistency and succulent, see. Because this is going to be a delicious dish and it always has been and we don't want to change that here today.

<Video shows Janie Johnson Smalls and then Dennis Stormer going to the grill>

J.J. Smalls: We fix a lot of shrimp and okra, shrimp gumbo, shrimp gravy. Many people if they have not prepared this be-ahead of time, don't bother using the crab, but it's really good with the crab. And many people like it hot, um-

S. Woodward: When you say hot...

J.J. Smalls: With red pepper.

S. Woodward: Ah. Yeah.

<Video shows Dennis Stormer adding ingredients to the pot>

D. Stormer: I'm not measuring this, because you just want it to be a nice, good seasoned pot. Potatoes first since they take the longest...to cook. So what we're gonna do now is let those potatoes cook a little bit.

<Video shows Tim Patridge>

T. Patridge: The amazing thing about this stew is that it has not changed ingredients over the years. It's still the basic same five ingredients: crab, shrimp, sausage, potatoes and corn. What has been left out in recent years because of the labor involved in cleaning them has been the crab, but it's still is the same methodology as before. Each ingredient still has its own distinct flavor and adds something to the pot, but does not lose its own identity.

<Video shows a woman outside of the house>

S. Woodward: What is it about the lowcountry boil or the Frogmore stew that's so much a part of South Carolina.

Woman: Well everything-everything you need is just about here. It's not hard to get-the hardest-you know, shrimp is plentiful [hopefully]. We have to [break] so we preserve some things to keep it plentiful, but shrimp is plentiful. So, everything else you can about gather and put it together. But the fun of it, uh, after cooking it, is sitting down and eating. When you take your-you have your time to really peel your shrimp or eat your shrimp and eat on the other part and it's just-it's a fun time. But it's-it's um, it's-it's done when you know somebody, like you say, if somebody's coming home. You want to have something special. And then say pour it out it's in the table right at the table and let's eat, and you have a time to really communicate with each other and, um, talk about all sorts of things. You can solve a whole lot of problems around some Frogmore stew.

<Video shows Tim Patridge and then Dennis Stormer adding ingredients>

T. Patridge: ‘Cause each one of these [items], if you look at it, adds color and texture and a different sh-actual form to the stew itself. They say, it’s one of the most beautiful dishes that you can find when it’s cooked properly.

J.J. Smalls: I would always tell someone, “You would never go hungry if you live around here because the creeks, the hunting ground, so much food-even food that were grown on the farm were shared in the community.