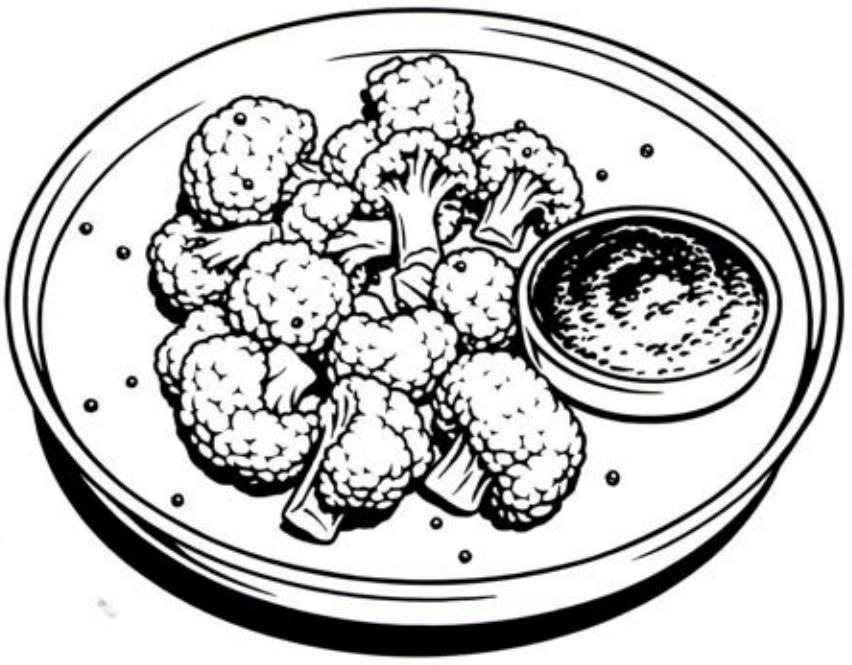

DEAR *BON APPÉTIT,* I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THE CAULIFLOWER "SHRIMP" COCKTAIL AT **THE BLACK SHEEP** IN RICHMOND. MY WIFE CAN'T EAT SHELLFISH, SO IT'S PERFECT FOR HER.

—**CALVIN RILEY**, *Richmond, VA*

POOR MAN'S "SHRIMP" COCKTAIL

8 SERVINGS *Chef Kevin Roberts transforms humble cauliflower into a dead ringer for shrimp cocktail with a brief poach in cleverly seasoned water and a dunk in cocktail sauce. "It's something my mom used to make for us," he explains. "As kids, we went to the lake a lot, and she would throw this down as a snack. It's also a great party option for vegetarians and people with shellfish allergies."*

- **1 cup dry crab boil seasoning (such as Zatarain's or Old Bay)**
- **¼ cup kosher salt**
- **2 yellow onions, quartered**
- **6 garlic cloves**
- **3 lemons, halved crosswise**
- **2 1-lb. heads of cauliflower, cored, trimmed into 2" florets**
- **Cocktail sauce**

INGREDIENT INFO: Crab boil seasoning is available at most supermarkets in the seafood or spice section, and at specialty foods stores.

Combine crab boil, salt, onions, garlic, and 6 quarts water in a large pot. Squeeze juice from lemons into pot and add lemon halves. Set pot over high heat and bring liquid to a boil. Cook for 10 minutes to let flavors meld. Using a slotted spoon, remove onions, garlic, and lemons from broth; discard. Return liquid to a rolling boil.

Add cauliflower; turn off heat, cover pot tightly, and let stand until cauliflower is crisp-tender, 5–10 minutes. Drain; spread out cauliflower on a rimmed baking sheet and let cool completely. **DO AHEAD:** Cauliflower can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

Arrange room-temperature or chilled cauliflower on a platter with cocktail sauce for dipping.

DEAR *BON APPÉTIT,*
Spice cake can be heavy, so I was surprised at how light the sorghum version at **Hot and Hot Fish Club** in Birmingham, AL, was. I'd love the recipe.
—**BABS FAWKES**, *Mulga, AL*

SORGHUM SPICE CAKE

10–12 SERVINGS *This easy cake swaps out molasses for lighter-flavored sorghum syrup, a Southern staple. For more on sorghum, see Prep School, page 106.*

- **1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. (2¼ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, divided, plus more for pan**
- **2 cups plus ¼ cup all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for pan**
- **1¼ cups sugar, divided**
- **1 tsp. baking soda**
- **1 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **¾ tsp. kosher salt**
- **½ tsp. ground allspice**
- **½ tsp. ground ginger**
- **¼ tsp. ground nutmeg**
- **½ cup sorghum syrup**
- **2 large eggs**
- **1 cup buttermilk**
- **Rum raisin ice cream**

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A 9"-diameter springform pan with 2¾"-high sides

Preheat oven to 325°. Butter and flour springform pan. Combine ¼ cup flour, ¼ cup sugar, and 2 Tbsp. butter in a small bowl. Using your fingertips, rub together until mixture is crumbly; set topping aside. Sift remaining 2 cups flour, baking soda, and next 5 ingredients into a large bowl. Using an electric mixer at low speed, beat 1 cup butter, 1 cup sugar, and sorghum in another large bowl, occasionally scraping down sides, until smooth, 2–3 minutes. Add eggs; beat until light and fluffy, 3–4 minutes. Beat in flour mixture in 3 additions, alternating with buttermilk in 2 additions, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Pour batter into prepared pan.

Bake cake until top looks just set, about 40 minutes.

Immediately sprinkle topping over cake; bake until a tester comes out clean when inserted into center, 25–30 minutes longer. Transfer to a wire rack and let cake cool in pan. Remove pan sides.

Cut into wedges; serve with ice cream.