

BACON-WRAPPED JALAPEÑO SHRIMP POPPERS



SERVES: 4 | PREP TIME: 15 minutes | GRILLING TIME: 6–8 minutes



SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 16 cocktail toothpicks

- 16 large shrimp (21/30 count), peeled and deveined, tails left on
- 8 slices bacon, each cut crosswise in half
- 2 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, cut into 16 sticks
- 16 pickled jalapeño pepper rings (from a jar)



Wrapping shrimp in bacon seems like a great idea until you realize that the shrimp are fully cooked before the bacon gets crispy. Solution: precook the bacon slices for a few minutes before wrapping the shrimp. Also, secure both ends of each slice with a cocktail pick so the bacon does not fall off.

1. Soak the toothpicks in water for at least 30 minutes.
2. Butterfly each shrimp by cutting along its curved back from the head end to the tail end, cutting almost all the way through the shrimp. Leave the tail section intact.
3. Prepare the grill for direct cooking over medium heat (350° to 450°F).
4. In a microwave oven on high, cook the bacon until the fat is slightly rendered, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Place one piece of the cheese and one jalapeño ring inside each butterflied shrimp. Close the shrimp, and then wrap one piece of bacon around each shrimp so that the cheese and the jalapeño are enclosed. Insert a toothpick into the shrimp, pushing it through the exposed end of the bacon strip so that the bacon is held in place and the shrimp is held closed. Grill over *direct medium heat*, with the lid closed, until the shrimp are firm to the touch and just turning opaque at the center and the bacon is crisp, 6 to 8 minutes, turning once. Serve immediately.

