

November 1, 2021

Meeting Notes

Cajun and Creole Cooking

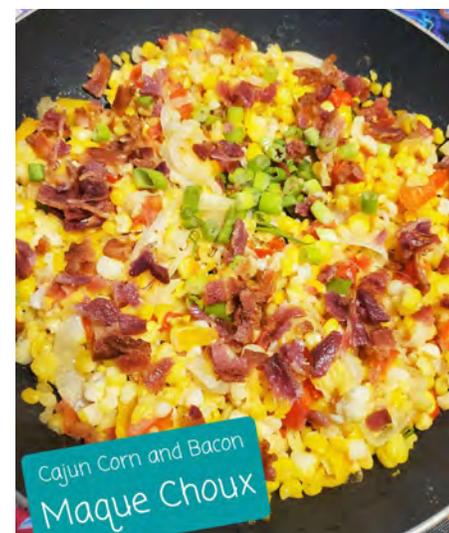
Virtual Cookbook Club



Participants: Gladys, Judy, Sandy, Elissa, JoEllen, Iveta (in absentia), Joan

Elissa decided to make a side dish because she had noticed that the main dishes she was finding in the cookbooks and on websites for Cajun and Creole cooking required many ingredients to make. This recipe for Maque Choux (pronounced 'Mock Shoo'). It just so happened that Elissa had husked and removed the kernels from fresh corn earlier this year, and she was "hoarding" the precious bags of fresh-frozen kernels in her freezer. She wasn't sure she should use any of it for this recipe, but then decided it was worth it.

The recipe, which she found online, called for corn, onions, green and red bell peppers, cayenne pepper to taste, tomato, and milk. She cut the recipe in half because it seemed to be too large for what she needed. Her daughter loved it. Elissa said she will definitely make it again.



Elissa's Cajun Corn and Bacon
Maque Choux

Plan for Early 2022 Meetings

January 3
All Appetizers

April 4
Wisconsin Favorites

February 7
Breads

May 2
Jewish Cooking

March 7
Sea Food

June 6
Canadian Cooking

Gladys thought she had chosen an easy Gumbo recipe. She had previously been given a Gumbo recipe in a cooking class she took on a trip to New Orleans. That recipe called for *filé* (pounded or powdered sassafras leaves used to flavor and thicken soup, especially gumbo). Unable to find that recipe in time for our November 1 meeting, however, she found one online (<https://tastesbetterfromscratch.com/authentic-new-orleans-style-gumbo/#recipe>).

As Gladys puts it:

“It took 1½ hours to cook the roux [constantly stirring a mixture of flour and canola oil], and preparing this dish made a mess in the kitchen. But it was really good. Make it again? Not for year or so! After I have forgotten how much trouble it was to make!”

This recipe calls for sausage, shrimp, and chicken. She was pleased that it actually calls for rotisserie chicken, which saved some time. The stock was delicious, she says. Her husband, Steve, “kind of stuttered when he bit into the sausage,” probably due to its spiciness. But he definitely likes this Gumbo dish (and was eating some during this meeting).

The recipe should serve 6-8 people. Gladys had quite a few servings leftover, and she feels it should freeze well.



Gladys' New Orleans Style Gumbo

JoEllen made Jambalaya as well as Pecan Cornbread. She used *Justin Wilson's Easy Cookin': 150 Rib-Tickling Recipes for Good Eating* cookbook. She said “it was a riot” reading it since he writes like he used to talk on his TV cooking show. (He died in 2001.)

In this recipe, JoEllen used 6 chicken thighs and sausage that is not spicy. She enjoyed this dish, but her son told her it should have been more spicy. She used Louisiana Hot Sauce and Cajun/Creole mustard. It did not take very long to make. Instead of serving it over rice, she opted to eat it like a very thick soup. JoEllen gave away four portions of this dish because she just cannot eat that much.

JoEllen served the Jambalaya with Pecan Cornbread, which she made in a 10-inch cast iron frying pan. It had a good flavor with the pecans, and made way more than one person could eat.



JoEllen's Pecan Cornbread (left)
and Jambalaya (right).



Sandy made spicy food, but not from the Cajun or Creole traditions. She noted how long those recipes would take to prepare, and felt she didn't have enough time to devote to that this month. She ended up making an Indian dish called Ground Beef Curry from a cookbook she owns, *Betty Crocker Best-Loved Pot Pies, Casseroles, and One-Dish Meals*.

This recipe calls for Garam Masala, which Sandy found at The Grainery. Sandy notes, "Garam Masala (new to me!) originates in India and is a blend of up to 12 dry-roasted ground spices including black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, cardamom, dried chiles, fennel, mace and nutmeg." This is a spice blend associated with Indian cooking. As described on thepioneerwoman.com, "*The name garam masala means hot or warm spices, but the flavors aren't hot as in spicy—garam masala is more of a warming mix, with flavors like cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and peppercorns (and many others!). This unique blend of spices is supposed to hit many different notes of taste: It's sweet, warm, earthy, and even slightly floral.*" Sandy noticed that after tasting this dish, a sensation of heat came in at the end.

This dish also calls for two cans of diced tomatoes and cilantro. It is to be served over rice. She enjoyed this dish and will make it again.



Sandy's Ground Beef Curry

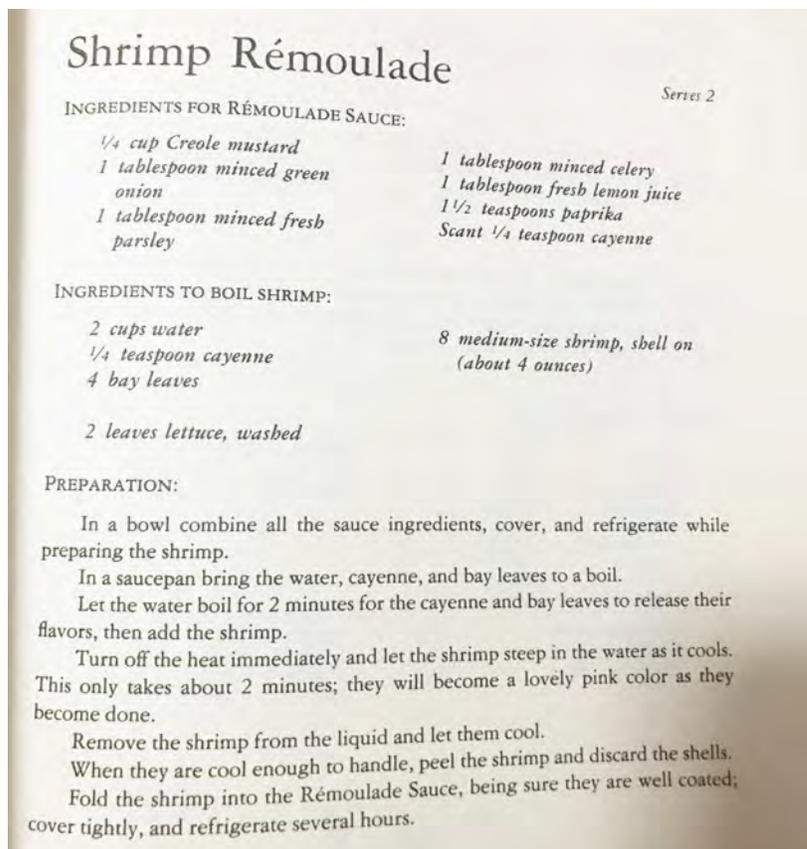


**The December Meeting is on
Monday, December 6.**

Find a cookbook on our display of Winter Holiday Favorites, or go back to your own collection of recipes and whip up an old family favorite.

Iveta prepared **Eggplant Fingers and Shrimp Remoulade**. She got these two recipes from the book *Louisiana Light: Low-fat, Low-calorie, Low-cholesterol, Low-salt Cajun and Creole Cookery* by Roy Guste. Iveta was not able to join the meeting on November 1, but sent the photos and Rémoulade recipe, along with the comment that “both were good and my book had simple heathy recipes.”

Iveta's Shrimp Rémoulade Recipe



Iveta's Eggplant Fingers (top) and Shrimp Rémoulade (bottom)



excerpt from

How To Make Real Creole Food. Put a little spice in your life. by Kris Richard

<https://spoonuniversity.com/how-to/how-to-make-real-creole-food>

The term “Creole” refers to the people that were descendants of the French and the Spanish in the 1700s that settled in New Orleans, Louisiana. Creole food is a blend of flavors from different cultures: German, Spanish, French, African, and many more. Creole foods are spiced perfectly with seasonings like paprika, red pepper, garlic, and onion. These flavors contribute to dishes like red beans, gumbo, and gravies (and they taste AWESOME).

One of the most important flavor bases of Creole cooking is the trinity. This trinity isn't just any old combination of veggies either. It consists of onion, celery, and bell pepper and serves as a building block for most creole and cajun dishes, especially classic jambalaya.

The trinity is always sautéed with oil until the veggies are soft and translucent. It is added after meat is browned, so that the onion, celery, and bell pepper can work its ~magic~ by scraping up all the seasoned meat bits left in the pot. It differs from the usual three part combination, mirepoix (celery, onion, and carrot), because it adds the mild spice from the bell pepper, rather than a mild sweetness from carrot.

Gladys' New Orleans Style Gumbo Recipe

Ingredients

For the Roux:

1 heaping cup all-purpose flour

2/3 cup oil (vegetable or canola oil)

For the Gumbo:

1 bunch celery , diced, leaves and all

1 green bell pepper , diced

1 large yellow onion , diced

1 bunch green onion , finely chopped

1 bunch fresh parsley leaves , finely chopped

2-3 cloves garlic

1-2 Tablespoons cajun seasoning *

6-8 cups Chicken broth *

12 ounce package andouille sausages , sliced into 'coins' (substitute Polska Kielbasa if you can't find a good Andouille)

Meat from 1 Rotisserie Chicken*

Instructions

Make the Roux*: In a large, heavy bottom stock pot combine flour and oil. Cook on medium-low heat, stirring constantly for 30-45 minutes.

This part takes patience--when it's finished it should be as dark as chocolate and have a soft, "cookie dough" like consistency. Be careful not to let it burn! Feel free to add a little more flour or oil as needed to reach this consistency.

Brown the sausage. In a separate skillet on medium-high heat place the sausage slices in one layer in the pan. Brown them well on one side (2-3 minutes) and then use a fork to flip each over onto the other side to brown. Remove to a plate.

Cook the vegetables in broth. Add ½ cup of the chicken broth to the hot skillet that had the sausage to deglaze the pan. Pour the broth and drippings into your large soup pot.

Add remaining 5 ½ cups of chicken broth. Add veggies, parsley, and roux to the pot and stir well.

Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil for 5-7 minutes, or until the vegetables are slightly tender. (Skim off any foam that may rise to the top of the pot.) Stir in cajun seasoning, to taste.

Add meat. Add chicken, sausage, and shrimp.

Taste and serve. At this point taste it and add more seasonings to your liking--salt, pepper, chicken bullion paste, garlic, more Joe's stuff or

more chicken broth--until you reach the perfect flavor. Serve warm over rice. (Tastes even better the next day!)

Notes

Roux: The roux can be made 3-5 days in advance, stored in a large resealable bag in the fridge.

Cajun seasoning: My preferred brand is Joe's Stuff Cajun Seasoning but I can usually only find it online. You could use any brand, but may need to adjust the amount added, to taste. You can also make your own cajun seasoning.

Chicken and broth: The best way to make this gumbo is by buying a rotisserie chicken--removing all the chicken, and using the carcass to make homemade chicken broth. Then make the gumbo using the chicken and homemade broth. You can use store-bought chicken broth, but homemade is way better! Here's a tutorial for making it from scratch.

Storing Instructions: Store Gumbo covered in the refrigerator for 3-4 days.

Freezing Instructions: This recipe makes quite a lot, so save leftovers for another day! To freeze gumbo, allow it to cool completely and store it in a freezer safe container (separate from the rice) for 2-3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and reheat on the stove or in the microwave.

Sandy's Ground Beef Curry

from *Betty Crocker Best-Loved Pot Pies, Casseroles,
and One-Dish Meals*

1.5 Cps Uncooked Rice (I used Basmati)
1 Lb Lean Ground Beef (I used 1.5)
1 Small Onion, Chopped (I used medium, always
increase onion :)
1 Clove Garlic, Chopped
2 T Grated Gingerroot
1 T Tomato Paste
1 t Salt
2 t Cumin
2 t Chili Powder
1 t Garam Masala (from Grainery)
2 Cans, 14.5 oz each, Diced Tomatoes,
Undrained
3 T Chopped Fresh Cilantro

Cook rice in water as directed. Meanwhile, in 12" skillet, cook beef, onion, garlic and gingerroot over medium heat for 5 - 7 minutes, stirring, until beef cooked - drain if you want, I did not.

Stir remaining ingredients except cilantro into beef mixture. Reduce heat to medium, stirring occasionally, simmer uncovered 8 to 10 minutes.

Serve over rice, garnish with cilantro.

I really enjoyed this dish and will make it again. It is extremely simple and very tasty. The combination of spices, and perhaps the garam masala in particular, gave it a mildly spicy flavor with a bit of heat which sneaks up a few beats behind the other flavors. Since I love both hot and spicy, I will make this even more so in future!