



Pimiento Cheese

Chef Nathan Richard of Restaurant R'evolution/New Orleans

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups Duke's mayonnaise (can use any, but a true Southern chef only uses Duke's)
- 1 (4-oz.) jar diced pimiento, drained
- 1 tbs of pickled relish
- 1 tsp. of creole mustard
- 1 tsp. La hot sauce
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1/4 tsp. paprika
- 1 (8-oz.) block extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, finely shredded
- 1 (8-oz.) block sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded

Preparation

Stir together first 7 ingredients in a large bowl; stir in cheese. Store in refrigerator up to 1 week.

Music

- K. Gates — Black and Gold
- Tom Petty — Down South
- Luke Bryan — Muckalee Creek Water

Praline Bacon

Chef Josh Galliano of The Libertine/Saint Louis

Servings depend on who's eating it. Let's say 4. For me, it'd be 1.

Ingredients

- 1 lb thick sliced bacon
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup pecan pieces (or walnut pieces)

Preparation

1. Preheat an oven to 350 F. On a baking sheet tray, place a piece of aluminum foil that fits the entire tray.
2. Evenly place the pieces of sliced bacon on the tray, and make sure that none of the bacon overlaps.
3. Cook the bacon for 10 minutes. You do not want the bacon to be fully cooked; instead, the bacon should be about half way cooked with a good amount of fat rendered.
4. Remove the bacon from the oven, and allow to cool to room temperature. Before the bacon fat solidifies, pour the fat off of the sheet tray and reserve for another use.
5. In a food processor, combine the brown sugar and the pecan pieces, then pulverize. Remove the mixture from the food processor and reserve in an airtight container.
6. Distribute the pecan/sugar mixture over the top of the bacon slices, making sure to cover the tops of the bacon completely. This is not sprinkling on the mixture, but more of a packing the mixture on to the bacon.
7. Return the bacon to the oven and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on your oven. You want the bacon to become crisp at this point, but not to have any of the nuts burn. Remove the bacon from the oven, and allow to cool for 3 minutes before transferring to a serving plate. Be careful, the bacon fat and the caramelized sugar can cause a severe burn at this point.

Music

- The Meters — Fire on the Bayou
- Archie Bell and the Drells — Tighten Up
- Earl King — Trick Bag
- Jesse Hill — Ooh Ooh Pah Doo

Southern Style Cranberry Hot Sauce

Chef Alex McCrery of Tilit Chef Goods/New York City

Ingredients

12 oz. Cranberries (1 bag)
4 Cups Water
1/4 Cup Agave Nectar
1/2 Cup Apple Cider Vinegar
1 Tablespoon Kosher Salt
1 lb. Red Jalapenos or other hot peppers
2 Shallots peeled
12 Garlic cloves

Preparation

Simmer cranberries with water, agave, vinegar and salt for 45 minutes over med-low heat. Roast whole peppers (tops removed) with garlic and shallots wrapped in tin foil at 400 degrees for one hour. Chill everything together overnight. Blend until smooth the next day.

Music

The Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band — Easy Come Easy Go
Nate Dogg — I Got Love
The Black Keys — Never Gonna Give You Up

Coca-Cola Fried Chicken

Chef Ryan Trimm of Sweet Grass/Memphis

Brine

6 C Coca-Cola (4 cans)
2 T Salt
6 Cloves of Garlic (smashed)
8 Dashes of Tabasco

Preparation

Quarter 1 whole bird and submerge in the brine. Allow to sit on brine over night.

Day Two

Heat your oil to 350. Remove chicken from brine, rinse and pat dry. Dredge the chicken through seasoned flour.

Seasoned Flour

8 C All Purpose Flour
2 T Cayenne Pepper
2 T Old Bay
2 T Black Pepper
2 T Salt

Then place the chicken quarters in a mixture of
6 C buttermilk and 2 eggs

Run the chicken through a bowl of regular All-purpose flour again.

Lightly place the chicken in the fryer and fry until beautifully golden brown. I usually serve with fresh kale and Tabasco vinaigrette.

Music

Taj Mahal — Lovin' In My Baby's Eyes
Dire Straits — Southbound Again
The Band — Atlantic City
Credence Clearwater Revival — Long As I Can See The Light
JJ Cale — Cocaine

Red Boudin

Chef Jeremy Conner of Village Cafe—POUR / Lafayette

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a classic Cajun Boucherie. More specifically, I was on the Boudin station. We made white and red Boudin, the red using the blood of the slaughtered hog whisked with salt to prevent coagulation. It was an education as Mr. Johnson and Mr. Norbert, two men known around Acadiana for their Boudin, were on hand to show me how it's done. They have almost 100 years combined experience making Boudin, and it was an honor to learn from them.

Here's the recipe for the red Boudin:

Ingredients

5# pork shoulder, chunked

1 whole pork liver, chunked

2 ea large yellow onions, large diced

4 ribs celery, large diced

3 ea green bell peppers, large diced

2 cloves garlic

1 pound green onions, sliced thick, greens only

8 ounces parsley leaves

8 - 10 cups cooked rice

pork blood, as needed, whisked with a liberal addition of salt to prevent coagulation

2 tsp cayenne pepper

2 tsp black pepper

1 tsp white pepper

1 Tbsp onion powder

1 Tbsp kosher salt

hog casings, as needed, about 20 feet, rinsed and soaked

Preparation

Boil the chunks of pork shoulder in enough water to just cover them until they are tender, about 45 minutes. Add the chunks of liver to the pot and make sure there is enough water to cover, adding more to make up for evaporation. Continue to boil until the liver is thoroughly cooked. Remove the chunks of meat and liver and reserve the cooking liquid. Allow the meat and liver to cool slightly then mix with the chunked onions, celery, and peppers, the garlic cloves, the green onions, and the parsley leaves in a mixing bowl.

Pass this mixture through a meat grinder with a 1/4" die. Place ground mixture in a mixing bowl and add seasonings except for salt. Taste and adjust the spice level to your taste. Add the cooked rice to the meat mixture. You are looking for a mixture that has ever so slightly more rice than meat.

At this point you will add some of the stock left from cooking the meat and an equal amount of the blood. The amount to be added depends on many factors, but the end consistency is what's important. The mixture should be bright red and very moist, but not wet. If you pick up some of the meat mixture with a slotted spoon, some blood/stock mixture should run through the spoon, but not a lot. At this point, take a spoonful of the mixture and cook it in a skillet. When it is done, taste it for saltiness. The blood, if whisked properly, contains a significant amount of salt, but probably not enough to adequately salt the entire mixture. Adjust as desired.

Place the rest of the mixture in a sausage stuffer and use the hog casings to stuff links. They can be short or long, but do not make rope sausage. The links will keep the amount of liquid consistent in each section of the sausage. Once all of the mixture is cased up, boil the links in the remaining stock from before until they are firm but not hard and they reach an internal temperature of 165.

Remove the links from the pot and serve immediately or refrigerate for up to a couple of days, heating thoroughly before eating.

Music

The experience of making this recipe in its setting stirs several emotions. A boucherie in general is a compelling, ritualistic experience, and the blood boudin certainly represents the most taboo aspect. To pair with music: first, there is the brutality of the slaughter. Steel yourself as you might, there is no escaping it:

Slayer - Raining Blood

Then, as all participants whisk off to perform their tasks, there is a bright sense of community. The animal is sacrificed for the sustenance and fellowship of the many:

Edward Sharp and the Magnetic Zeroes - Home

And finally, especially as a non-native Cajun, there is the sense of conjuring and consuming a vast and deep heritage. This transcends the experience of cooking or preparing food and offers the opportunity to observe the origin and nature of a culture.

Through the boucherie, the cook can see the result of multiple sets of outcasts settling with others like them in one area and through the generations, evolving into the kind, welcoming, hospitable, and varied people of Cajun country today. "Bienvenue ! Y'all come on in..."

Les Frères Balfa - Chère Bassette

Grilled Octopus with Lentils

Chef Justin Devillier of La Petite Grocery/New Orleans

Ingredients

3 medium to large octopus tentacles (raw)
Salted water (3% salt)
2 bay leaves
1 lemon
1 tbs black peppercorns

Preparation

Place all ingredients in a medium heavy bottomed pot and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for one hour. Turn off heat and let the octopus cool in the poaching liquid. Remove the octopus and discard all other ingredients. Dry the octopus with towels and store in the refrigerator until use.

For the lentils

1/2 cup of small diced carrots
1 Tbs [Brunoise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunoise) shallot
1 cup cooked lentils (drained of any cooking liquid)
1/2 tsp picked thyme leaves
1/2 tsp minced chives
1/2 cup chicken stock
1 lemon wedge
salt
pepper

Sweat the shallot and carrot in a sauté pan for 3 minutes. Add the lentils and two spoonfulls of chicken stock. Season with salt and pepper. Add the fresh herbs and taste for seasoning. Adjust acid with a squeeze of lemon.

For the bacon jus

2 slices of smoked bacon
1 shallot Brunoise
3 chopped button mushrooms
1 thyme sprig
1/4 cup of red wine

1 cup of veal glace de viande
1 Tbs Butter

Render the bacon and drain off all the fat. Add the shallots and mushrooms to the bacon. Caramelize the aromatics for about ten minutes. Careful not to burn. Deglaze with red wine and add the thyme. Reduce to sec and add the veal glace. Reduce by 1/3 and strain through a chinoise. Return to pan and mount in the butter over medium heat. Season with salt and pepper.

To complete

Char the Octopus on the grill until hot throughout. Place a spoonful of lentil mixture on the plate and rest the octopus on top. Sauce with the bacon jus.

Music

Otis Redding — These Arms of Mine

Bob Dylan — Tangled Up in Blue

Willie Nelson — Whiskey River

Banana Fritters

Chef Susan Spicer of Bayona—MONDO/New Orleans

(makes 24 fritters)

Ingredients

1 ½ cup flour

¾ teaspoon baking powder

pinch of salt

4 tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg

2 eggs separated

2/3 cup milk

3 bananas, (1 pureed, 2 diced)

1 tablespoon corn oil

Vegetable oil for deep-frying

Cinnamon sugar (½ cup sugar mixed with 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon)

Preparation

Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg in a large bowl. Add the egg yolks and 1/3 cup of the milk, and stir to form a smooth paste. Stir in the remaining 1/3 cup milk and the corn oil. Add banana purée and dice, and mix until batter is smooth. Set aside to rest for 30 minutes.

Beat the egg whites and the salt with an electric mixer (or by hand) until they form stiff peaks. Fold the whites into the batter.

Fill a deep-fryer or a deep skillet with oil to a depth of 2 inches, and heat it to 375 F. Drop spoonfuls of the batter into the oil and fry until well browned on both sides, 3-4 minutes. Drain fritters on paper towels and then roll in cinnamon sugar. Serve immediately.

Music

The Rebels — Banana

Harry Belafonte — Banana Boat (Day-O)

Ike & Tina Turner — It's Gonna Work Our Fine

Joe Turner — Boogie Woogie Country Girl

Love What's On Your Coaster and It Will Love You Right Back

Host Gwen Thompkins of Music Inside Out/New Orleans

If I'm ever challenged to fight for — or maybe even die for — a spice, it would have to be well-worth my rotting carcass on the battlefield.

Dammit, it would have to be something more than fine.

Perhaps ginger.

The first time I had a rye and ginger cocktail was at the the Lost Love Lounge in New Orleans. It looks good in a glass, it goes down easily and I like to think it has the power to do a great deal of good in the world.

Ingredients

One part rye

One (or two) parts extra strength ginger beer

One teaspoon simple syrup

A dash of cayenne

Serve with nice thick rocks of ice

I've made up half of the ingredients, but they work. All the proportions are to taste. For heaven's sake, why aren't you tasting by now?

Music

Johnny Adams — There is Always One More Time

Paul Simon (featuring Allen Toussaint) — Tenderness

Dr. John — Pretty Libby