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Louisiana COOKIN'

Cajun for Two



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IRMA THOMAS, AND MORE!

WYNTON MARSALIS'

Gumbo
Z'Herbes

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8 WAYS
TO LOVE
CRAWFISH

April 2009

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Plus: 5 Strawberry Treats
9 Dishes to Eat Under the Sun

More than **50** recipes inside this issue

“ Fresh food from farmers’ markets is edible education for everyone. ”

— Alice Waters,
Breakfast From the Market, page 12

Louisiana
COOKIN'
April 2009

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BLUE CRAB SPRING ROLLS

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LENT

CULINARY INSPIRATION GETS SPIRITUAL

Lent is about sacrifice, will power, and self-control. The focus is on repentance and prayer, fasting and Jesus. But this spiritual time can also be an exciting 40 days and 40 nights of triumphing over gluttony and desire, of innovative recipe creation, and of getting back into shape almost by order of God after the past few gut-busting holidays.

The past's traditional Lent practices forbade meals before the evening Vesper prayers were read; alcohol couldn't be consumed, and a generally meat-free weekday diet was encouraged. Theologian Theodulphus of Orleans of the eighth century "regard[ed] abstinence from eggs, cheese, and fish as a mark of exceptional virtue," not a requirement; Pope St. Gregory I later made it church common law that folks stay away from "lactinicia"—all items from flesh animals, including dairy—barring exceptions made through donations to the church.

Throughout history, exact rules have always been fairly flexible, and those who practice Lent these days also make many different sacrifices, whether they give up alcohol, sweets, meat, or something else. But overall, many people do choose to give up meat and resort to fried fish. Instead of heading down the same old path this year, why not make Lent a fun test for yourself? Extend your recipe repertoires with restrictions only as tough as you want to handle.

Restaurants all over Louisiana support the decision to uphold Lenten conventions with the construction of special menus. But in today's age, chefs find ways to follow the rules without giving up flavor, a tasty tongue-in-cheek toeing of the line of the principle of Lent. For 40 days, use these recipes from New Orleans-trained chefs to motivate you to find new and inventive ways to keep those taste buds awake, obey your convictions, and slim down at the same time. Don't grow despondent about dietary restrictions; instead, push your skill to the next level and find your culinary inspiration this Lent!

“Instead of heading down the same old path this year, why not make Lent a fun test for yourself? Extend your recipe repertoires with restrictions only as tough as you want to handle...use these recipes from New Orleans chefs to motivate you to find new and inventive ways to keep those taste buds awake...”



WEST INDIES SALAD

WEST INDIES SALAD

MAKES 2 TO 3 SERVINGS

Courtesy of Chef Danny Trace,
Commander's Palace, Destin, FL

- 1/2 yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 pound Louisiana jumbo lump crabmeat, picked for shells
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup ice water
- 3/4 cup white vinegar
- 1 bunch lolla rosa lettuce
- 1 bunch red oak lettuce
- 1 bunch arugula
- 1 mango, sliced into thin ribbons
- 1 papaya, diced
- 1 heart of palm, julienne
- dressing, to taste (recipe follows)

Layer half the onions in a small plastic container, place crabmeat on top, and layer remaining onions. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Slowly pour ice water, then vinegar on top. Do not mix!

Marinate 24 hours. Drain and mix the crab and onion before serving on top of the lolla rosa, red oak, arugula, mango, papaya, and heart of palm.

Dressing

- 1/2 cup cane molasses
- 1/4 cup Louisiana cane vinegar
- 1/2 cup olive oil blend
- cayenne pepper, to taste
- salt, to taste

In a blender or food processor, pour the molasses and vinegar in first. With the machine running slowly, drizzle in the olive oil, emulsifying the oil into everything else, adjust seasonings to taste

Chef's Note: You may garnish with sweet potato chips (peel sweet potato and fry at 300°F until crispy), plantain chips (same as sweet potato chips), or coconut chips (slice fresh coconut very thin and bake at 225°F until crispy).

 **PAIR WITH:** Monchhof Estate Riesling "Mosel-Saar-Ruwer" (Germany)

GARLIC GRILLED SHRIMP

MAKES 2 TO 4 SERVINGS

Courtesy head chef, U.S. Prime, New Orleans, LA

- 2 pounds wild-caught Louisiana shrimp, (21-25 count)
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt

Place the shrimp in a large glass bowl. Stir remaining ingredients together; pour over shrimp. Cover and marinate for 3 to 4 hours. Grill over hot coals for about 5 to 7 minutes, turning halfway through the cooking time.

 **PAIR WITH:** Matanzas Creek Sauvignon Blanc "Sonoma County" (California)

Did you give up meat but not sweets? Try Oatmeal Pie with Apricots and Vanilla Ice Cream
Recipe from Chef Amy Lemon of Emeril's Delmonico, New Orleans, LA.

Find it on our website at www.LouisianaCookin.com/OatmealPie.htm.



TROUT PONTCHARTRAIN

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

*Courtesy of Chef John Besh,
Restaurant August, New Orleans, LA*

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon Creole seasoning
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3 cups panko bread crumbs
- 6 filets of speckled trout
salt and pepper, to taste
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 handful porcini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 cup Louisiana jumbo lump crabmeat
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chives, chopped
and/or picked chive blossoms
- 2 dashes Tabasco sauce
- Hollandaise Sauce*

In a medium mixing bowl, blend the flour with the Creole seasoning. In another mixing bowl, combine the beaten eggs with the milk and have another bowl ready with the panko bread crumbs.

Season the fish filets with salt and pepper and dredge in the seasoned flour, then dip in the egg wash, and dredge in the panko bread crumbs. In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, cook the fish using the olive oil.

Cooking only a couple filets at a time, make sure that you cook each one to golden brown on both sides. Remove them from the pan and drain them on absorbent paper towels, and keep in a warm place.


Drain the pan of any excess oil, wiping the rim to prevent fire, and lower the heat to medium and add the butter and porcini mushrooms. Cook the mushrooms for a couple of minutes before adding the shallots, garlic, and crushed red pepper flakes.

Stir frequently to make sure the shallot and garlic don't brown; cook them until they soften before adding the crab meat, lemon juice, and a little salt.

Just heat the crab through a bit and taste for seasoning, adding a couple dashes of Tabasco and a bit more salt and pepper if needed. Fold in the chopped chives and remove from the heat.

To serve, place a filet of fish on the plate and top it with a heaping spoonful of crab meat and mushrooms. Serve the Hollandaise sauce on the side, spooning over the fish and crab at the last moment.

*For Chef Besh's Basic Hollandaise Sauce recipe, log onto www.LouisianaCookin.com/Hollandaise

 **PAIR WITH:** Louis Jadot Pouilly Fuisse (France)

BLUE CRAB SPRING ROLLS

MAKES 5 SERVINGS

*Courtesy Chef Chris Lusk,
Café Adelaide, New Orleans, LA*

- 1 cup fresh Louisiana corn
- 1 cup Louisiana blue crab claw meat,
picked for shells
- 1 cup carrots, julienned
- 1 cup Napa cabbage, julienned
- 1/2 pound shitake mushrooms,
sliced and roasted
- 1/2 cup fish sauce
- 1/4 cup agave nectar
- 2 teaspoons cilantro, chopped
- 2 teaspoons basil, chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic, sautéed in oil
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger, sautéed in oil
salt and pepper, to taste
- 5 sheets spring roll wrappers

Place all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl, toss and allow to marinate for one hour. Place a few tablespoons of warm water on a dinner plate, dip spring roll wrappers in warm water, flip and repeat, set on another plate and wait until pliable, 1 to 2 minutes.

Divide filling into five portions to wrap with spring

roll wrapper. Place the filling on one side of the wrapper and make one complete roll to encase the filling. Tuck in the ends to seal in the filling.

Continue rolling up the wrapper until the end; the wrapper will stick to itself. Store completed rolls under a lightly damp paper towel in the refrigerator until needed.

Chef's Notes: Fish sauce is a condiment common to Asian cuisines, it can be found in most Asian food markets. Spring roll wrappers are dried rice paper; they are sold in most Asian food markets. Look for some pliability in them when flexed, if they begin to crumble, they are too dry, and may not soften properly.

 **PAIR WITH:** Don Olegario Albarino "Rias Baixas" (Spain)

PANZANELLA


MAKES 2 SERVINGS

*Courtesy of Leah Bartell, kitchen manager of Café Rani,
New Orleans, LA (this is her personal recipe and is not
available at the restaurant)*

- 2 1-inch thick slices good sourdough bread,
cubed
- 2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 medium cucumber, peeled and diced
- 1/4 cup chopped black or green olives
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup sweet onion, minced
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 1 pinch sea salt

Preheat oven to 400°F. Sprinkle cubed bread with olive oil and bake for 20 minutes until browned but still soft in center. Combine all other ingredients in large bowl; allow flavors to marry for at least 5 minutes. Layer the bread and vegetable mixture in a glass container ending with vegetables on top.

Pour any remaining juice over the top of the Panzanella. Cover tightly and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Serve chilled.

 **PAIR WITH:** Martini and Rosso Prosecco (Italy)

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COLD POACHED REDFISH WITH PEPPER AND PEAR, YOGURT, AND CILANTRO SAUCE

COLD POACHED REDFISH WITH PEPPER AND PEAR, YOGURT, AND CILANTRO SAUCE

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Courtesy Chef Lazone Randolph,
Brennan's Restaurant, New Orleans, LA

- 1 large yellow pepper
- 1 large red pepper
- 16 wild-caught Louisiana shrimp, (26–30 count) headless
- kosher salt, to taste
- ground cayenne pepper, to taste
- 3/4 cup light olive oil, in all
- 4 6-ounce pieces redfish steaks
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
- 1 rib of celery
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 large pears, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 2 cups low-fat yogurt
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped cilantro
- 1/2 pound spring mix or baby spinach
- juice of 1 small lemon

Remove the membranes from the peppers and slice them vertically into 4 pieces each. Peel and butterfly the shrimp, leaving the tail on. Baste lightly with 1/4 cup oil and sprinkle with kosher salt and cayenne to taste. Set aside.

Cut 4 pieces of aluminum foil large enough to wrap each fish steak, brush lightly with the remaining 1/4 cup of oil to prepare fish for poaching. Sprinkle each piece of fish with the shallots, kosher salt and cayenne. Place each piece of fish on the individual pieces of foil and wrap tightly to form a bundle. Set aside.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, add 6 cups of water, the peppers, rib of celery, bay leaf, and kosher salt. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce to a gentle simmer; allow to simmer for approximately 5 minutes, add the foil-wrapped fish to the pan and poach for another 15 minutes. Remove the mixture from the stove, draining off the water and discarding the bay leaf and celery. Remove the fish from the foil and reserve 1/2 cup of the poaching liquid from inside the bundles. Chill the poaching liquid, fish, and peppers separately in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat a griddle or grill pan over high heat. Place the shrimp in the pan and grill 3 minutes on each side, until shrimp are pink. Remove from the pan and chill in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes.

Place the pears into a blender and purée. Remove from the blender and place in a strainer to allow any excess liquid to drain. Place in a medium bowl and add the low-fat yogurt. Stir until well blended. Add the cilantro and stir again until nicely incorporated. Remove the shrimp, poaching liquid, peppers, and fish from the refrigerator. Add 1/4 cup of light olive oil and the lemon juice to the poaching liquid and whisk well.

Divide the spring mix or baby spinach among 4 large plates. Place the yogurt sauce in the middle of each pepper section. Drizzle the light olive oil mixture over the greens. Place a piece of fish in the middle of each plate, surrounded by 4 grilled shrimp. Position 1 yellow and 1 red pepper section on the side of each plate. ✦

 **PAIR WITH:** Graffigna Pinot Grigio "San Juan" (Argentina)

Su-Jit Lin, food editor of *Where Y'at* magazine and freelance writer, developed a passion for good eating when she was very young, literally growing up in restaurants. Appropriately, she divides her time among planning, cooking, discussing, and devouring great meals.