

GRAVY

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WHAT TO READ & COOK IN 2015



ISSUE #55

A QUARTERLY FROM THE SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE



Stories



THE SFA SERVES YOU...



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COVER PHOTO by *Andrew Thomas Lee*. PHOTO ABOVE by *Evan Sung*, from Senegal:
Modern Senegalese Recipes from the Source to the Bowl.

A SKILLET IN ONE HAND, A BOOK IN THE OTHER

by Sara Camp Milam

MOST OF THE SFA STAFF lists reading and cooking among their favorite hobbies, and I am no exception. To be honest, I tend to gravitate toward the former and let my husband take charge of the latter. He's by far the better cook, and I (sadly) can't play to my culinary strength—baked goods—every night. I don't read at the dinner table, though. My parents banned that practice when I was a much smaller bookworm.

We read a lot at SFA World Headquarters, too. If you follow our blog, you might have noticed that its new editor, Jenna Mason, has started a “What We're Reading” column. One desk over from Jenna at the *Gravy* office, I've begun to read four books that will come out later this year. These are books I think you should read—and, yes, cook from. Mark

Essig's *Lesser Beasts* is a compulsively enjoyable global history of the pig. *Senegal*, the latest cookbook by Dakar-born, Brooklyn-based chef Pierre Thiam, gives me a serious case of wanderlust. *The Jemima Code*, by Toni Tipton-Martin, compels me to scour used bookstores for hidden cookbook gems. And Cynthia Joyce's *Please Forward* frames the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina by way of a powerful collection from the post-disaster blogosphere.

This will be the third spring that Atlanta chefs Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison host New South Family Supper. Chefs from across the South will join them at their home, Summerland Farm, to stage an evening of food and drink that benefits the SFA. This year's NSFS menu is inspired by the unsung men and women who work in our region's restaurants, from dishwashers to valets. John T. and I were able to snag a few stories and recipes in advance, and we've shared them in these pages. And because SFAWHQ does not have a test kitchen, I asked Tamie Cook, a longtime SFA member and Atlantan, to test them. So when your churros fry up just right, and you find yourself wrapping tamales like a pro, you have not only the NSFS chefs and their colleagues to thank, but also Tamie.

More often than not, my outside-of-work reading is fiction. Earlier this year I read *The Last Days of California*, a quietly moving novel about adolescence, family relationships, and faith. The author, Mary Miller, is this year's John and Renée Grisham Writer-in-Residence at the University of Mississippi. I invited her for coffee, gave her some recent copies of *Gravy*, and hinted very strongly that if she ever wanted to write for us, you know, that would be pretty cool. But no pressure. She took the bait—you'll appreciate the turn of phrase when you read her piece in this issue about hunting, fishing, vegetarianism, and the love between parents and children.

As we go to press, I'm reading *At Night We Walk in Circles*, a fantastic novel by Daniel Alarcón. (I have a thing for Latin American literature, going back to my college major. While Alarcón wrote this book in English, it most definitely belongs on the shelf next to the likes of his compatriot Mario Vargas Llosa.) Alarcón, who grew up in Birmingham by way of Peru, now lives in San Francisco. So it will be a little harder arrange a meeting with him. I remain hopeful. 🍷

PHOTO: Eudora Welty's home library from the series *A Sense of Place*
© Susana Raab.



WINTZELL'S COUNTER

by Sandra Beasley

Before we have six seats and a trough of oysters, before J. Oliver slathers the wall in homespun, Charles Peters sells squash here, and canned beans; he sells bed frames & dressers & side tables; he sells insurance against rising waters; he sells whatever will send nine daughters and sons through college. Because in 1891, a black man can build two stories of clapboard for \$2,000, two blocks from the Creole Fire Station's fast horses, those racetrack rejects, because first to arrive on scene gets paid. Because the ghosts have not yet realized they are dying: Fifty-some years later, a merchant marine gives us West Indies by way of Mobile: crab lumped, layered in fine-chopped onion & the kiss of Wesson oil, & the slap of iced water & how God means for salad to be served, on a saltine. This is the last all-wood joint on Dauphin Street. The secret, we'll say, is in the cider vinegar: a hundred jaws of minor angels, macerating the haul.

PHOTO *courtesy of Wintzell's Oyster House, Mobile, Alabama.*





BILOXI BACON

by Sandra Beasley

If Marc Chagall's father had hauled fish
in Mississippi instead of Vitebsk,
it would be mullet winging over rooftops—
mullet, on violin—rooster and mullet,
mullet and goat. Chagall saw

the wonder of what sustains us: how one
can scavenge the bottom and still
rise, without apology,
by the silvered dozen. In a chapel
of mullet-paned glass we would gather

to watch each fish relay the baton
of its body from wave to wave,
across a marathon of hunger.
The body, fried, cradled in grits.
The body, smoked and lacquered in cane.

When casting nets to the Gulf,
who are we to judge terms of grace?
We save the gizzard, the star-white milt.
The bridal roe, on our tongues,
bursts with the promise of morning. 🍷

Sandra Beasley is the author of three poetry collections—Count the Waves, forthcoming in June from W. W. Norton; I Was the Jukebox; and Theories of Falling—as well as a memoir, Don't Kill the Birthday Girl: Tales from an Allergic Life. PHOTO by Richard Bickel.

MEAT

MARY EATS MEAT = MARY LOVES ME

by Mary Miller

GROWING UP IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, I didn't know anyone who didn't eat meat. My father and brothers were hunters. They brought home deer and turkeys and sacks of doves, and my mother took pictures of the most impressive in size and number. In my father's study, deer and fish were mounted on the walls; turkey beards lined the shelves. My sister and I used to look into the eyes of each deer to determine which one we liked best, which would be our boyfriend, was the most soulful. We could never make up our minds and would always forget which one we'd chosen because their eyes seemed equally unique, equally soulful.

I never went hunting with my father. Because he has two sons, my sister and I were exempt from these activities. My brothers, regardless of whether they'd wanted to be outdoorsmen or not, and mostly they hadn't—they were musician-types—had no choice. On weekends, they'd set out before dawn. My mother and sister and I awoke late to an empty house. We enjoyed their absence, relished these days without men. We didn't have to watch westerns on TV; we'd go to Little Tokyo and my



mother would tell us to order anything we wanted: “It’s on Dad.” As the afternoon progressed, we watched the clock, anxious as to how much time we had left.

My father did take me fishing a few times, but I never caught anything. I’d hold the rod and think about the chocolate bars he would buy me at the gas station on the way home as a reward. I had no patience for it, was horrified by live bait. But mostly I couldn’t see the allure of driving so far and staying still for so many hours when you could simply go to the store and buy a fish that had already been cleaned.

I knew my father had grown up doing these things in order to feed his siblings after his father left the family, that he was simply doing what he’d always done, the way he’d always done it, except now he had better equipment and paid a lot of money to belong to a hunting club. I thought about that, too—what was once a poor man’s way of life was now a rich man’s pastime.

After those few attempts at fishing, my involvement in my father’s outdoor activities was limited to one: helping him get his rods ready for the season. This involved holding a spool of wire on a pencil as still and taut as possible while he reeled. It took forever and he’d yell that I wasn’t holding it tight enough, that I was messing up his line.

AS I GREW OLDER AND MORE SULLEN, I DEVELOPED AN INCREASING DISTASTE FOR MEAT.

AS I GREW OLDER AND MORE SULLEN, I developed an increasing distaste for meat. My mother would have to remove my chicken from the bone because I found the bones offensive; I couldn’t bear for my teeth to touch them. I refused bacon and pork chops and steak in addition to deer and dove, which hurt my father’s feelings. He took it as a personal rejection. On the days I ate his bacon or hamburgers, he was nicer to me. His brain had settled on a simple equation: Mary eats meat = Mary loves me.

And so it became an issue much greater than whatever happened to be on my plate. Rejecting meat was a way for me to rebel against him for not knowing how to talk to me, how to interact with me. As a child, he’d simply had to love me, but as I developed into a young woman, he didn’t know how to express his love. He wasn’t like some of my friends’ fathers who would hug them as easily as they always had, purchase their tampons, talk to them about boys. I remember the time one of my friend’s fathers brought home a box of pads from the store. He placed them on the kitchen table and they sat there while we watched TV.

I tried out new phrases: “I don’t like steak”; “I don’t eat bacon.” At night my father would tell my mother he didn’t think I liked *him*. I didn’t know what to do with that. I was the child. He was the parent. Of course I liked him, but I wanted him to be my father and he didn’t know how.

For a time I stopped eating meat altogether. Over the years, I’ve been a vegetarian, a pescetarian, and other variations along these lines, but I’ve settled on something that feels much more natural: I eat what I want, when I want. When I’m with my father, I eat his food because I want him to know I accept him.

There are still so many things my father and I don’t talk about, but we try. He sends me Valentine’s cards he picks out himself, cards that say things he could never say. I like to picture him in the greeting card aisle at CVS, selecting the perfect message. I ask him about turkey season, or how many fish he caught. He asks what I’m working on, gives my ex-boyfriends mean and appropriate nicknames. And when I’m home and my father puts a steak on my plate, I cut a few small bites and chew the overcooked meat slowly, tell him how good it is. How perfectly it’s grilled. When he makes breakfast in the morning, I eat his bacon and like it fine. Sometimes I eat two or three pieces so he’ll know just how much I love him. 🍷

Mary Miller is the author of a story collection, Big World, and a novel, The Last Days of California. She is the 2014–2015 John and Renée Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi. PHOTO, PAGE 9, by Troy Stains.

HUSBANDRY

THE OTHER WHITE MEAT

HOW SCIENCE AND MARKETING
REBOOTED THE PIG

by Mark Essig



COWS ARE FOREVER STANDING IN FIELDS chewing grass, but you never know where you might find a pig. Over the past ten millennia, domestic swine have rooted clams from mudbanks, lapped up whey at dairies, gobbled chestnuts in forests, and “hogged down”—a technical term—crops in the field. They have been known to slurp snakes like ramen noodles.

Pigs are omnivores. That has been their virtue and their sin. Dietary flexibility meant that even the poorest people could fatten pigs at virtually no expense. It also meant that pigs ate filth: garbage, carrion, feces. Jews rejected swine as filthy, and Muslims followed suit. Christians fretted but embraced swine nonetheless—pigs were too useful to do without. They reproduce at astonishing rates and convert feed to meat on a tight ratio. Unlike beef and mutton, pork only improves when cured—crucial in the centuries before artificial refrigeration.

Romans feasted on pork with abandon, while peasants in Europe and pioneers in the United States salted it away against lean times. Though Americans considered themselves beef eaters, that was a matter of aspiration more than reality: For most of our history, we ate far more pork than beef. It was cheaper and kept better.

After World War II, however, more Americans moved to the city and earned enough money to buy beef and store it in their new refrigerators. Later, worried about fat, they switched to chicken. Pork was the food of the poor, and America was growing richer.

THE AMERICAN PORK INDUSTRY WAS FLOUNDERING. It would take all the brainpower and ingenuity of American government, universities, marketers, and pharmaceutical companies to set it right. By the 1960s, those resources were at the ready. Over the next four decades, the pork industry changed what pigs ate, where they lived, and how fat they grew. While they were at it, the experts went ahead and changed the color of pork from red to white.

In 1986 leaders of the National Pork Producers Council gathered in a darkened room to hear their advertising agency pitch a new industry tagline: “Pork—the Other White Meat.” When the lights came on after the two-hour presentation, the pork producers found themselves “in a state of shock,” one executive recalled. Hog farmers, along with everybody else, had always viewed pork as a red meat, in competition with beef. Now they were being asked to spend good money promoting

it as an alternative to chicken. According to *National Hog Farmer*, many thought it was a “dumb idea.”

But these were desperate times, so pork producers took the plunge. Since the 1970s, sales of poultry had soared as consumption of beef and pork plummeted. Studies linking red meat to heart disease and cancer had taken a toll, and Americans had become fearful of fat. In one survey more than a third of Americans agreed with the statement “Pork would be a good meat except for the fat.” The new campaign would convince people that pork was not bloody and fatty like beef but pale and lean like chicken.

With ice-skating star Peggy Fleming as spokeswoman, the pork industry launched the new marketing campaign at a January 1987 New York press event attended by the editor of *Better Homes & Gardens* and national television news reporters. Before the year was out, the advertising bill ran to more than \$9 million. Almost immediately, the campaign was deemed a success. Eight out of ten Americans recognized the phrase “the other white meat,” which lodged itself in that special place in the American mind that holds slogans like “Got Milk?” and “Just Do It.” In 2011 *Adweek* deemed the campaign “among the most successful rebranding moves in the history of the food biz.”

But it was more than a rebranding. The new slogan marked the culmination of a transformation in American farming. In 1945 pigs, bred by small farmers and raised outdoors on corn, grew thick layers of fat under their skin. By 1985, raised indoors on scientifically formulated feed and bred to exacting standards by large corporations, they produced very lean meat. The same qualities that suited pigs to small-scale production—fecundity and rapid growth—also made them perfect for industrial farming. In seeking to rebrand their product, pork producers had not just changed their tagline. They had created a new pig.

THE CORN BELT WAS HOME to the “lard-type” hog, as opposed to the “bacon type” or “meat type.” The leaner meat hogs—which included breeds like the Danish Landrace, Tamworth, and Large Yorkshire—had a thin layer of back fat and were often cured as bacon for the British market. The primary producers of these bacon-type pigs were Denmark, Canada, and Ireland, where pigs ate protein-rich dairy by-products that promoted lean muscle growth. Pigs that ate mostly corn—higher in carbohydrates than protein—ran to fat, which is why the Corn Belt became the center of global lard production.

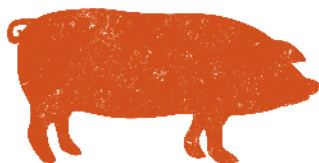
Corn Belt farmers historically had depended on the “lard-type” breeds—Poland China, Berkshire, Chester White, and Duroc Jersey—in response to market demands. Bulk purchasers of barreled meat—used to feed miners, sailors, and slaves—preferred fatty meat because it preserved better. There was also a big demand for pig fat as an industrial lubricant and cooking fat. Under some market conditions, a pig’s fat was more valuable than its flesh, and packers dumped hogs into the rendering vats, wasting all of the meat in order to extract the precious lard.

Lard, however, became increasingly less valuable, a shift that started in the late nineteenth century and accelerated with each passing decade. After John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company developed the oil fields of Pennsylvania, factory workers began to oil their machines with petroleum products rather than animal fats. Thanks to better technology for both canned food and artificial refrigeration, sailors and laborers could enjoy foods other than fatty pork. More people turned to vegetable oils such as soybean, peanut, and corn, which allowed a simple production cycle—grow plants and extract their oil—rather than the extra step required with animals: Grow plants, feed plants to pigs, extract fat from pigs. Health concerns about animal fats arose after World



War II, and brands such as Crisco advertised their vegetable shortenings as healthier than animal fat. All of these factors contributed to a single result: Demand for lard plummeted, and so did its price.

In response, scientists and farmers worked to breed leaner hogs. Their model was Denmark, the first specialist in intensive hog production and America's key rival in the global pork market. In 1907 the Danes had created swine testing stations to carefully monitor feed intake and carcass quality, allowing them to choose breeding stock from those animals that gained the most lean muscle while eating the least feed. American agricultural colleges developed similar testing programs, and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) created new genetic lines to distribute to farmers. The meatpacker Hormel awarded prizes to farmers who raised the leanest pigs, and the private breed registries changed their standards as well. The Hampshire registry, for instance, specified that hogs should have no more than 1.8 inches of back fat and a pork chop measuring at least four inches square. In the 1950s, a 180-pound hog carcass yielded thirty-five pounds of lard. By the 1970s, a pig of the same size produced just twenty pounds of lard.



SCIENTISTS AND FARMERS HAD CREATED “the other white meat.” Although the phrase originated in a marketing slogan, in one sense it was literally true. Scientists from Texas A&M University showed that a factory-farmed pork loin's levels of myoglobin—the protein responsible for redness—were much lower than those of beef and comparable to those in chicken or fish. That pale color owed much to the new farming methods. Myoglobin carries oxygen to working muscles: The less a muscle works, the paler its color. Chicken breasts are white because those muscles are never used for flying. Crated veal is pale because the calf had no room to walk. Pigs raised on pasture had meat of a darker hue. By the 1980s pork had become a white meat because confinement pigs, packed in small pens, rarely used their muscles.

Whether customers preferred meat from these new pigs was a different question. After an initial boost spurred by the campaign, pork sales leveled off. People started thinking of pork as white meat, but they didn't start buying much more of it: per capita pork consumption stayed level at just under fifty pounds from the 1980s through the 2000s. Meanwhile, consumption of chicken—the original white meat—kept climbing, from fifty-four to sixty-nine pounds per capita.

In all of this innovation, one aspect of pork production was ignored: flavor. At an industry conference in the 1960s, an animal scientist at Oklahoma State University observed that in the rush to create lean pigs, “pork quality has been completely ignored by swine breeders.” In 2000, industry experts writing in *National Hog Farmer* came to the same conclusion: “Currently, industry breeding schemes create pigs that grow fast and efficiently but lack the superior meat and eating quality consumers prefer.”

One quality problem, identified in the 1960s and still unsolved, is “pale, soft, and exudative” pork, which is gray, mushy, and tasteless. This meat, it turned out, came from skinny, neurotic pigs. “Their personalities are completely different,” the animal scientist Temple Grandin wrote of the lean pigs. “They're super-nervous and high-strung,” and the stress appeared to be damaging their meat. Such pigs also had a tendency to drop dead of shock. As a group of veterinarians explained, such pigs “show an increase in carcass lean but much greater susceptibility to sudden death.”

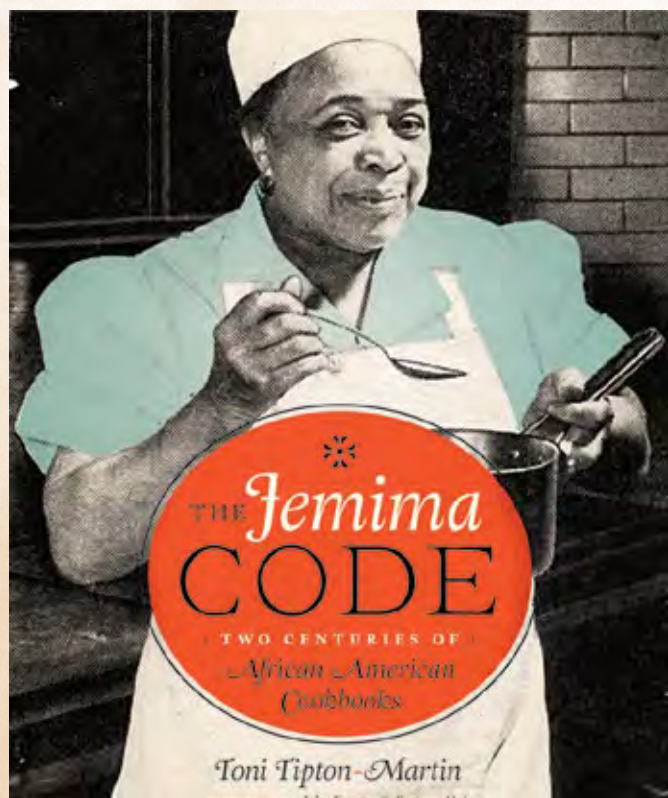
In creating lean pigs, American pork producers had created a new set of problems, of which meat quality was only the most obvious. Modern pig farming, many critics charged, destroyed small farms, fouled land and water, and threatened public health. Most of all, the critics said, the new farms made pigs miserable—a charge that, by the turn of the twenty-first century, was becoming harder to refute. 🐷

Excerpted from Lesser Beasts: A Snout-to-Tail History of the Humble Pig by Mark Essig. Available May 2015 from Basic Books, a member of The Perseus Books Group. Copyright © 2015. PHOTO, PAGE 12, by Chris Fowler. PHOTO, PAGE 14, by Paul Callan.

THE JEMIMA CODE

LOTS OF US COLLECT COOKBOOKS. *Toni Tipton-Martin collects cooks. That's an inelegant summation of what Toni—an SFA founder in 1999 and one of two Egerton Prize winners in 2014—has accomplished with The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks, out this fall from University of Texas Press.*

The distinction, however, is important. Her book tells the story of black men and women who have leveraged their knowledge of food, their experience in kitchens small and large. Cooking their recipes, reading their words, and listening to their voices, Toni has gleaned a complicated and nuanced story of African American accomplishment. By gathering African American cookbook writers under one set of covers, Toni has framed their labor, their vision, their worldview.



THE LENA RICHARD COOKBOOK

*Lena Richard
New Orleans, 1939*

LENA RICHARD WROTE AND SELF-PUBLISHED her cookbook in 1939 in order “to put the culinary art within the reach of every housewife and homemaker.” The book featured the “secrets of Creole cooking which have been kept for years by the old French chef.” Court Bouillon, Crawfish Bisque, Grillade a la Creole, Vol-Au-Vent, Calas Tout Chauds, Shrimp Remoulade, Pain Perdu, and Creole Chicory Coffee are just a few of the mysteries she shares to give everyone the opportunity to excel in the food industry.

She breads Creole Fried Chicken in a mixture of seasoned flour and cracker crumbs. The holy trinity (celery, onion, and green pepper) seasons Creole Red Beans, Jumbalaya (jambalaya), and a creamed oyster-and-shrimp filling for puff pastry shells she calls Oyster Poulet. Her



Lena Richard

ICE CREAMS AND SHERBETS

LENA'S WATERMELON ICE CREAM

1½ pints whipping cream	3 cups or 1½ quarts strawberry sherbet or other sherbet of reddish color
½ cup raisins	
Green coloring	
½ cup sugar	

Whip cream until stiff, add sugar, and color one-half green. Line inside of mold with layer of the green cream to simulate the watermelon rind. Put in a layer of white cream next to the green. In center put layer of 3 cups of sherbet, sprinkling this with raisins. Fill mold with remaining two cups sherbet. Place wax paper over all. Put cover on mold, pack in equal parts ice and salt, let stand for four hours.

To serve: Remove mold from ice and wipe thoroughly to get rid of all salt. Take off top of mold and invert mold on a large platter. Cover mold with a hot towel until the cream leaves the sides of the mold.

OLD-FASHIONED CUSTARD ICE CREAM

1 quart milk	1½ cups sugar
6 eggs	1 vanilla bean
1 pint cream	

Beat eggs until light, and add sugar. Heat milk to boiling point, add egg and sugar mixture. Cook until slightly thickened. Remove from fire and let cool. Whip the cream and then add to the first mixture. Split vanilla bean, scrape inside and then add bean and scraping. Freeze with equal parts of ice and salt. When frozen, remove dasher and pack. Set aside until ready to serve.

caterer's eye for presentation is evident in Lena's Watermelon Ice Cream, a three-layer sherbet treat set in a round mold to resemble a whole melon. A few casual and formal menus are recommended, and she includes a section of miscellaneous culinary techniques that include roux making, mixing standard cakes, and measuring how-tos.

Before Julia Child ever appeared on television, Richard hosted a weekly cooking show on New Orleans's first television station, WDSU, teaching viewers a thing or two about how to make gumbo. She was a well-seasoned cook, quietly achieving the kind of professional swagger celebrity chefs demonstrate today. She ran a catering company, served as head chef at restaurants in New York and Virginia, packaged and sold her famous Shrimp Soup Louisiane by mail order, and owned and operated her own restaurant and a cooking school in New Orleans.

When the father of American gourmet cuisine, James Beard, and the food editor Clementine Paddleford learned of Richard's noteworthy accomplishments, they lobbied the trade to republish her book, despite her race. Houghton Mifflin agreed to do so, with a subtle reminder to the author that she was an outlier. The ladylike portrait that radiated in the frontispiece of her self-published edition was removed and the title changed.

FOUR GREAT SOUTHERN COOKS

*Edited by DuBose Publishing
Atlanta: DuBose, 1980*

A UNIQUE FORMAT isn't the only thing that sets this book apart from the soul and Southern tomes that weighed down shelves during the soul food revival. Four culinary biographies were crafted as a record of the South's "proud legacy" of hospitality, commitment to high-quality ingredients, and an approach to cooking that reflects the diversity of the region. An invisible narrator, presumably white, retells the story through "mouth-watering dishes made lovingly from scratch" by a "fab four" born and reared in Georgia. These domestic workers perfected their craft in the grand houses of Southern legend with specialties ranging in style and substance from old to new, homely to fancy, casual to formal, and collard greens to caviar.

Daisy Redman grew up in Savannah, surrounded by good food and good cooks. She watched her grandmother practice the culinary arts, stirring hot pilaus, okra gumbo, and beef stew, and serving tea cakes in her

Daisy Redman



Ruth Jenkins



Beatrice Mize



William Mann Jr.



restaurant in the Old Tybee Depot. Her celebrated catering menu included rich seafood dishes such as Creamy Crab Soup spiked with sherry; Shrimp Toast, a deep-fried appetizer; Lobster Thermidor; Stuffed Baked Shad with Shrimp Sauce; the Savannah specialty Low Country Shrimp; and

Coffee Liqueur Sauce for ice cream that is essentially homemade Kahlua.

Ruth Jenkins had a knack for pie perfection long before she became known for her fork-tender country ham, crisp french-fried cauliflower (served as an appetizer with a rich mustard dip), and coconut cake. She “meticulously pinpointed” the measure of each ingredient to ensure that the book-buying public could achieve her results. Chilled Caviar Pie, Quail in a Bag, and Barbecued Chuck Roast with a splash of bourbon are specialties that stand alongside Southern staples.

Beatrice Mize was an innovative and resourceful cook who made her living by turning leftover ham into ham mousse and yesterday’s chicken into today’s chicken à la king. She began her career by cooking traditional Southern specialties and earned fame for dishes with international origins as well. In 1919 she took over the Dew Drop Inn, her father’s small café in Cornelia, Georgia. She earned honors for the meals that she and her father cooked and served to three hundred workers on the Tugalo Dam project in Tallulah Falls. And she was remembered for her Brown Sugar Pound Cake, topped with a pecan glaze, and Rose Petal Wine.

William Mann Jr. contributed recipes taken from the handwritten cookbook he kept during the 1920s, formulas he attributed to the Southern cooking teacher Mrs. S. R. Dull. Others he acquired from visitors to his employers’ home. The remainder, such as Junior’s Dove Pie, Roast Leg of Lamb basted with white wine, and the light gingerbread he adapted from an old English recipe, are his “own inspired creations.” 🍷

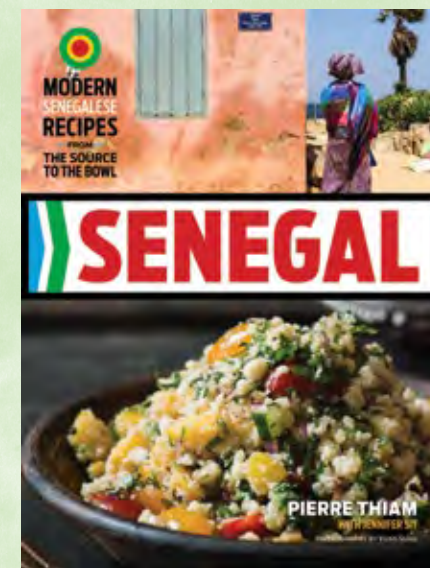
Text and images from *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* (University of Texas Press, September 2015), reprinted with the permission of University of Texas Press and Toni Tipton-Martin.

TRANSATLANTIC

SENEGAL

TRANSATLANTIC TASTES

YOU WOULD BE FORGIVEN for thinking that Senegal is not part of the American South. In fact, you’d be right, in the geographic sense. In terms of foodways, though, Senegal is a close neighbor of both the Lowcountry and the Gulf Coast. Scholars such as Jessica B. Harris have written at length on this culinary kinship and its roots in the slave trade. The recipes and stories that follow are excerpted from *Senegal: Modern Senegalese Recipes from the Source to the Bowl*, by Pierre Thiam with Jennifer Sit. Flipping through the book, poring over the holy-cow-I-want-to-go-there-right-now photos by Evan Sung, a grocery list of familiar ingredients appear: Black-eyed peas. Peanuts. Okra. And rice. Lots of rice. Fans of Louisiana jambalaya will quickly warm to thiebou jenn, a rice-vegetable-fish concoction. We’ve included Thiam’s thiebou jenn recipe here, along with a moving argument for translating the success of Carolina Gold rice to the Senegalese market.





THIEBOU JENN

THIS IS THE ONE DISH THAT UNITES ALL SENEGALESE. Thiebou jenn, our national dish, is served daily in many Senegalese households, each with their own special recipe. Though very traditional, no Senegalese cookbook would be complete without a thiebou jenn recipe. This version calls for certain ingredients that may not be accessible in many Western markets, but that shouldn't discourage you, as Vietnamese or Thai fish sauce is a good substitute that will bring the fermented flavor characteristic of thiebou jenn.

The selection of root vegetables to be used is up to you. Traditionally thioff, a very popular fish in Senegal, is used in thiebou jenn, but any firm-fleshed fish such as grouper, sea bass, haddock, or halibut will work. If you have your fishmonger cut your whole fish into steaks, make sure you keep the head and tail to add to the pot. There are many different ways to prepare thiebou jenn and this is a slightly more traditional version than the recipe in my first cookbook, *Yolele!*

Thiebou Jenn

SERVES 10

- 1 large whole thioff or grouper (about 5 lbs.), scaled, gutted, and cut into steaks about 1½ inches thick, reserving the head and tail
- 1 cup rof (recipe follows)
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- Salt
- 2 white onions, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 cups tomato paste
- 5 cups water
- 1 cup dried white hibiscus flowers (optional)
- 2 whole Scotch bonnet peppers
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 palm-size pieces guedj (a dried, salted, and smoked fish product)

2 pieces yeet, rinsed (a dried, fermented shellfish product)
½ head green cabbage, cut into 3 wedges
1 turnip, peeled and cut into thick wedges
1 globe eggplant, halved lengthwise
1 small butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into large chunks
1 yuca (4 to 5 inches long), peeled and cut into large chunks
2 carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks
2 bitter eggplants (optional)
¼ lb. small whole okra pods, trimmed
1 handful shelled tamarind pods or 1 Tbsp. tamarind paste
2 cups broken white rice, or jasmine or basmati rice, washed and drained
2 limes, cut into wedges

Note: If you can't find guedj and yeet, substitute with Vietnamese or Thai fish sauce, using about a total of ¼ to ½ cup, to taste.

Cut two 2-inch-long slits into the meaty part of each fish steak. Stuff each slit with about 1 tsp. of the rof. Place the fish, including the head and tail, in a shallow bowl or baking dish and coat with the remaining rof. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

Heat the vegetable oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add 2 pinches of salt, the onions, green pepper, and tomato paste. Reduce the heat to low and stir well. Stirring occasionally to avoid scorching, cook for 10 to 15 minutes, until the vegetables are soft and the tomato paste turns a dark orange. (You may need to add 1 to 2 Tbsp. water to further prevent scorching.)

Add the water and stir well. The paste will thin out and become sauce-like. Return to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for about 30 minutes, until the oil separates and rises to the surface.

Carefully add the fish steaks, including the head and tail, along with the hibiscus (if using), Scotch bonnets, and a pinch of black pepper. Cook uncovered over medium heat for about 15 minutes, until the fish is cooked.

Carefully remove the fish and set aside in a large bowl. Cover and keep warm. Add the guedj and yeet (or ¼ to ½ cup fish sauce) to the pot. Partially cover the pot, leaving the lid ajar, and simmer for 10 minutes.



Add the cabbage, turnip, eggplant halves, squash, yuca, carrots, and bitter eggplants (if using). Return to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat and simmer for another 20 minutes. Add the okra and cook for 10 more minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

Remove the vegetables and place in the bowl of fish. Add a few ladles of broth and the tamarind.

Line a large colander with cheesecloth and add the washed rice. Place over the simmering broth and cover. Let steam for 10 to 15 minutes.

Add the rice to the broth and give it a big stir. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Use a ladle to skim the excess oil from the top; discard the oil. There should be just enough broth to cover the rice; if not, remove the excess broth with the ladle. Tightly cover with a lid and cook until the rice is tender and the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes.

When the rice is finished, arrange the rice on a large platter. Scrape the crust from the bottom of the pot and place in a bowl to be served on the side. Arrange the fish and vegetables in the center of the rice. Serve with lime wedges.

ROF

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 bunch parsley, coarsely chopped
- 1 white onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 scallions, chopped
- 1 vegetable or fish bouillon cube (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. chile flakes
- 1 Tbsp. freshly ground black pepper

Place all the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until coarse, or pound in a mortar with a pestle. 🍲

A SYSTEM OF RICE PRODUCTION, BROKEN

AFRICA PRODUCES MORE GRAINS than any other continent. *Oryza glaberrima*, one of two principal varieties of rice that exist in the world, was born in West Africa. It is the same rice that was brought to the Americas through the slave trade along with the captives, experts in its cultivation. Those captives were taken to the Carolinas, among other places in the Americas. There, the new crop quickly became a boon to the economy, and was even nicknamed “Carolina Gold.” Among the captives were many Diola men and women from the Casamance region of Senegal, where part of my family originates and rice is held sacred.

The story of how our native rice became immensely successful across the Atlantic and neglected at home is a case study. *Thiep* (meaning “rice” in Wolof) is what Ivorians jokingly call Senegalese people. We are big rice consumers indeed. Rice is eaten more than any other grain in Senegal, but alas, only 45 percent of rice consumption is sourced locally. In a country where more than 30 percent of the daily caloric intake comes from rice, this reliance on such a heavily imported sustenance grain is alarming. According to research by the German Development Institute, “no other country in sub-Saharan Africa is so food-import-dependent, especially on one specific product: rice.”





Although rice production in West Africa has doubled since 1985, consumption has increased at an even higher rate due to population growth, further intensifying our dependence on rice imports. However, rice wasn't always central to the staple diet in Senegal. During precolonial times, the main cereal was millet; rice production was for the most part limited to the confines of Casamance and its consumption elsewhere was a luxury.

Senegal's dependence on rice and its struggle to become self-sufficient dates back to colonial times, when the French imposed the cultivation of cash crops such as peanuts and cotton. The French heavily promoted the cultivation of peanuts in Senegal in order to produce peanut oil for European markets. We subsequently became one of the world's leading exporters, producing almost one-quarter of the world's peanuts in the early 1960s.

Since much of our farmland was now dedicated to cash crops, we began importing our subsistence crops. Indochina, whose rice production was also controlled by the French, conveniently became our supplier. The French imported cheap broken rice, which is considered an inferior, substandard product (the leftovers from rice processing) on the international market. Broken rice became the rice of choice in Senegalese households and, half a century since independence, that preference remains today, especially in urban areas. Embraced by the population, it became the favorite choice in the preparation of popular dishes such as thiebou jenn. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), today more than 95 percent of the rice Senegal imports is broken rice. We are in fact the largest market for the product worldwide, with rice coming from not only Thailand and Vietnam, but also India, Pakistan, and Brazil. Since urban markets represent 65 percent of Senegalese rice consumers, and 90 percent of the urban market buys imported broken rice, this preference is a key obstacle to shifting consumption to domestic rice.

The food crisis in 2008 was a harsh awakening for countries such as Senegal, showing how our large dependency on imported rice makes us incredibly vulnerable to the volatility in the international market. It was a key opportunity to turn to domestic rice, but the supply could not meet the demand. In response, the government invested heavily in initiatives for boosting domestic production. However, as the import prices for rice soared, the government temporarily eliminated tariffs and even subsidized imports to try to keep the prices low, which conflicted

with the goals of their own domestic programs. What is at stake beyond the livelihoods of rice growers and those directly involved in the industry is the food security of an entire nation and the opportunity to alleviate poverty and bring economic growth.

Of course, achieving such self-sufficiency is no simple task. On the supply side, there needs to be a greater and more reliable marketable surplus. Right now, the supply chain is challenged by a number of issues including a lack of fertilizer and seed markets that function well, high transaction costs, and limited access to credit. Government programs have focused on increasing production, but they have largely ignored how to create a demand for local rice and bring it to market.

Two of the biggest obstacles are the existing preference for broken rice and the perception that local rice is of low quality. The small, informal mills that most harvesters use do not sort rice mechanically because it's a task that rural households are used to taking on themselves at home. Ungraded conventional rice found at market is also usually a mix of varieties, sometimes of differing quality. So the first challenge is to upgrade the quality of the rice by improving the processing, milling, and drying. Such upgrades to infrastructure will surely require private sector investments. Once there is a high-quality product that aligns with consumer preferences, there are the challenges of bringing it to market and creating demand and awareness through branding, marketing, and promotion.

A few years ago, there was an experimental auction that showed that consumers in Dakar and Saint-Louis were willing to pay a premium price for branded, local, high-quality rice. There is amazing potential, but we seem stuck in an unsustainable system that our so-called independence hasn't yet figured out a way to resolve. Meanwhile, our native and much more nutritious rice only barely survives thanks to its sacred place in Diola culture. *Oryza glaberrima*, aka the prized Carolina Gold across the Atlantic, patiently awaits the day that it will become "Senegal Gold." 🍷

EXCERPTED FROM Senegal: Modern Senegalese Recipes from the Source to the Bowl, by Pierre Thiam with Jennifer Sit, photographed by Evan Sung. Lake Isle Press, September 2015. "A System of Rice Production, Broken," written by Jennifer Sit. PHOTOS, PAGES 25, 27, 29, and 30 by Evan Sung.

RECIPES

HONORING THE GROUND CREW

STORIES AND RECIPES FROM NEW SOUTH FAMILY SUPPER

EACH SPRING, Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison of Bacchanalia restaurant in Atlanta invite chefs to join them for New South Family Supper, a celebration of the region's diversity that also serves as a benefit for the Southern Foodways Alliance. This year the April 12 event celebrates the unsung heroes of the restaurant world, including dishwashers, waiters, valets, hosts, prep cooks, bussers, and more. All impact the dining experience. Few get recognized for their work.

Think about it. Farmers are finally beginning to get their due. Chefs got their due a while back. Now it's time to celebrate the "members of the ground crew." That's the term Martin Luther King Jr. used to describe the workaday men and women who put their lives on the line during the civil rights movement. This edition of the New South Family Supper pays homage to the unsung heroes of the restaurant world, the workaday men and women who sustain the industry.

To develop the menu for New South Family Supper, Anne asked each chef to create a dish that pays homage to members of his or her team. More than twenty chefs from across the region will cook together. All will conceive dishes and tell stories like the ones that follow. The stories here are from Atlanta. At the New South Family Supper, we will celebrate the good work of ground crew members across the region. All year long, SFA encourages you to celebrate the unsung who work in the restaurants you know and love.

NEW SOUTH
Family
SUPPER
A BENEFIT FOR THE SFA



THE DISH:

Mukimo with Blood Sausage

THE INSPIRATION:

Lawrence Njuguna

Lawrence Njuguna grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. He moved to the United States in 2000, when he was twenty years old. After spending a winter in Michigan, he moved south to Atlanta. He made connections through Atlanta's Kenyan community that led to serving jobs at Cracker Barrel, Spaghetti Warehouse, and Dave & Buster's. Eventually Lawrence became a host and valet at Beluga, a martini bar.

When Ford Fry opened JCT. Kitchen on the westside in 2008, he hired Lawrence to work as the valet. Lawrence has been an important addition to our complex since his arrival on the scene. Now Lawrence operates a valet service with seven locations around Atlanta. But he spends most of his time with us on the westside. He is always there to help—we frequently use his taxicab hook-ups for fast pick-ups. He has a quick smile and affable demeanor.

Lawrence is also quite the gourmet. A frequent diner at all the westside restaurants, he's especially fond of our way with offal. When he's working, he likes to chat with the guests about their meals and offer recommendations. For our Lawrence-inspired dish, we are preparing blood sausage accompanied by mukimo. This popular Kenyan side dish, a favorite of Lawrence's, is normally a mash of corn, potatoes, and peas flavored with cilantro. We put a Southern twist on it by using Sea Island red peas, hominy, and collards.

— Anne Quatrano, *Bacchanalia*

Mukimo and Blood Sausage

SERVES 4 TO 6

½ cup Anson Mills Sea Island red peas
 2 tsp. salt, plus extra for additional seasoning
 2 lbs. Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and quartered
 2 ½ cups packed, chopped young collards
 1 cup cooked hominy (preferably Anson Mills)
 Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 lb. cooked blood sausage (may substitute boudin noir, boudin, or other hearty sausage)

Place peas and salt in large pot and cover with water by 1 inch. Set over high heat and bring to a boil. Decrease heat to maintain a brisk simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Add potatoes and collards and enough water to cover. Return to medium-high heat and continue to cook for 20 minutes. Add hominy and continue to cook for an additional 10 minutes or until everything is tender.

Drain remaining water. Mash vegetables with a wooden spoon until most lumps, but not all, are smooth. Season with additional salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Serve with sausage. 🍴

THE DISH:

Seafood Soup, aka Sopa de Serafín

THE INSPIRATION:

Serafín Rojas

In 1991 Serafín Rojas was the first employee I hired to work at the Sundown Cafe (now the Cheshire Bridge location of Taqueria del Sol). He started as a dishwasher, and he's been with me ever since. Now he is in charge of nothing and everything. Serafín is one of those people who just wants to do his job. He has never been interested in moving up in the kitchen. Finally, I made him move over to prep because I thought he was too old to be washing dishes.



Serafin is very funny when he's in a good mood. And very grouchy when he's not. But no matter what kind of mood he's in, whether it's raining or snowing, he always shows up for work. He was born in Oaxaca but lived near Acapulco for much of his life. He moved to Atlanta in the mid-1980s and has been with me for nearly twenty-four years. Two of his sons and one of his grandsons work for Taqueria del Sol. And his nephew, who started working with us at age seventeen, is now one of our kitchen managers. I'm the godfather to one of Serafin's children.

He used to sell tamales out of his car. Now he makes a seafood soup with leftover shrimp or fish from the kitchen. The consistency falls between a cold soup and a coctel de camarón. He uses ketchup, fish stock, avocado, cilantro, onions, and tomato. We just call it *sopa*—it doesn't have an official name. It's one of those soups that once you start eating it, you can't stop. For New South Family Supper, we will make it together.

— Eddie Hernandez, Taqueria del Sol



Sopa de Serafin

SERVES 12 TO 14

Soup Base

5 cups ketchup
2 cups water
2 cups fish stock
2 cups finely diced tomatoes
1 cup finely diced onion
1 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
2 jalapenos, seeded and finely diced
½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbsp. Tabasco sauce
Combine all ingredients in large bowl and refrigerate.

Seafood

1 gallon water
4 bay leaves
1 onion, peeled and halved
3 Tbsp. salt
½ lb. snapper, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 lb. octopus
1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined

Garnish

2 cups diced avocados
Crackers
Tabasco

To prepare seafood:

Add water, bay leaves, onion, and salt to a large pot, place over high heat, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, add octopus for 1 minute. Remove octopus and bring water back to a boil. Add octopus for 1 minute. Remove octopus and bring back to a boil. Add octopus and cook for 20 minutes. Remove, coarsely chop, and chill.

Bring water back to a boil, add shrimp, and cook for 2 minutes. Remove, coarsely chop, and chill.

Bring water back to a boil, add fish, and cook for 1 minute. Remove, coarsely chop, and chill.

To serve soup:

To 1 cup of soup base, add some octopus, shrimp, fish, and diced avocados. Serve with crackers and Tabasco sauce. 🍴

THE DISH:

Anson Mills Grits with Nettle Pesto, White Oak Pastures Chicken Liver Gravy, and Cured Egg Yolk

THE INSPIRATION:

Gilberto Santana

My brother-in-law and business partner, Lance Gummere, met Gilberto Santana at a previous kitchen job. They've worked shoulder to shoulder for seven years. When Lance and I started Bantam + Bidy, we brought Gilberto on as a chef. Gilly, as we call him, is a native of Guerrero, Mexico. He has a tremendously positive attitude and a kind personality. He's the sort of guy whose quiet dignity resonates throughout the business.

Gilly's work is super high quality and reliable, and he never complains. When we feel overwhelmed in the kitchen, we look over at Gilly and there he is, quietly, steadily keeping us out of the weeds. Lance likes to say that even though Gilly is ten years his junior, he teaches Lance how to act like an adult.

We encourage him to help us develop specials. Sometimes his dishes draw on his Mexican heritage. He makes a posole soup that's dynamite. And because he has been trained by chefs with classical French technique, he can just as easily turn out a great trout with brown butter and caper sauce.

Bantam + Bidy is like a diner, so we try to source ingredients that are high-quality and also affordable. I'm interested in elevated peasant cuisine, as is Gilly. So to pay homage to him, I came up with this dish that manages to be both humble and special.

—Shaun Doty, *Bantam + Bidy*



Anson Mills Grits with Nettle Pesto, White Oak Pastures Chicken Liver Gravy, and Cured Egg Yolk

SERVES 6

Cured Pastured Egg Yolks

- 2 cups kosher salt
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. rosemary leaves
- 6 unbroken egg yolks

Combine salt, sugar, and rosemary in a medium bowl. Spread half of the salt mixture in the bottom of a small glass baking dish. Carefully place the yolks on top of mixture, spacing them so they are not touching each other. Gently cover with the remaining salt mixture. Place in the refrigerator for 5 days or until firm. Once firm, remove eggs, brush away

excess salt, and transfer to 2 layers of cheesecloth. Tie and hang in a cool place to dry for a minimum of 24 hours to a few days. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Nettle Pesto

1 gallon water
1 Tbsp. salt
4 quarts wild stinging nettle leaves (may substitute lacinato/dinosaur kale)
5 garlic cloves
3 Tbsp. chopped pecans
3 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra as needed
1 ½ tsp. kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In a large pot, bring water and salt to a boil over high heat. Prepare an ice bath.

Wearing gloves, pick nettle leaves from stems. Add leaves to boiling water for 30 seconds to wilt. (If using kale, cook for 1 minute.) Remove leaves to the ice bath to chill. Once cool, squeeze leaves dry. Place leaves in the carafe of a blender and add the garlic, pecans, Parmesan, olive oil, and salt. Blend until smooth. If it doesn't blend, add a bit more olive oil until it does. Try to keep it as thick as possible. Taste and season with pepper and additional salt as desired. Reserve.

Chicken Liver Gravy

2 cups chicken livers, cleaned of connective tissue (Doty recommends White Oak Pastures)
1 cup all-purpose flour
Salt and freshly ground pepper
4 Tbsp. peanut oil
3 Tbsp. cold butter, divided
1 Tbsp. chopped parsley
¼ cup Marsala wine
½ cup chicken broth

Season livers with salt and pepper and toss with flour to coat.

Place a large sauté pan over medium heat, add oil and 1 Tbsp. of butter, and heat until the butter is lightly browned. Add the livers and cook until browned and cooked through, approximately 3 minutes per side. Remove livers to a cutting board and roughly chop.

Pour the excess oil from the pan, return pan to the heat, and add the Marsala wine, stirring to deglaze pan. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Add the remaining 2 Tbsp. of butter and return livers to pan. Season with additional salt and black pepper, add parsley, and stir to combine.

Grits

2 cups cooked Anson Mills white grits
1 cup heavy cream
Nettle pesto
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Add cooked grits to a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Add half of the cream and ½ cup of the nettle pesto. Whisk to combine. Adjust the thickness by adding the remaining cream and additional pesto as needed to create a mixture that is thick but pourable. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

To Serve:

Divide grits among 6 warm plates. Spoon chicken liver gravy over grits and with a fine grater, grate a bit of cured egg yolk on top. Serve immediately.

Cook's note: Use remaining nettle pesto as a sauce for pasta or seasoning in soups. 🍴

THE DISH:

Tamales de Rajas y Queso

THE INSPIRATION:

Ignacio Barquera

My colleague Drew Belline introduced me to Ignacio (“Nacho”) Barquera. When we were opening The El Felix, we brought Ignacio on to help us develop the menu and serve as a line supervisor. He helped us develop the recipe for our corn tortillas, and he taught the kitchen staff the technique for making puffy tacos. You have to agitate the oil to get them to puff up and stay puffy. Ignacio bastes the tortilla with oil, and the next thing you know, it blows up like a balloon.



We asked him what kind of tamales we should serve at The El Felix, and he told us that when he was growing up in Mexico City, there were times when his family couldn’t afford meat. So they made tamales with strips of poblano pepper (known as “rajas”), Oaxaca cheese, and salsa verde. Ultimately, we settled on pork tamales for The El Felix menu. For New South Family Supper, I’ll prepare a version of those tamales as well as Ignacio’s tamales de rajas y queso.

—Ford Fry, *JCT. Kitchen + Bar*

Nacho’s Tamales de Rajas y Queso

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 3 DOZEN TAMALES

3 to 4 dozen corn husks, soaked in warm water for 1 to 2 hours or until soft and pliable

3 large poblano peppers, roasted, peeled and cut into 72 strips

1 lb. Queso Oaxaca or Chihuahua, cut into 36 small bars about 2 ½ inches by ½ inch

Salsa Verde

1 lb. tomatillos, husks removed, rinsed, and halved if large

1 medium onion, peeled and halved

4 garlic cloves, peeled

3 whole jalapenos, stems removed

Water

1 bunch cilantro, rinsed thoroughly

1 ½ tsp. sea salt

Place tomatillos, onion, garlic, and jalapeno in a large pot and cover with water. Place over high heat, cover, and bring to a boil. Decrease heat to maintain a simmer and cook until all ingredients are soft, approximately 45 minutes.

Pour mixture into a fine mesh strainer and drain water. Transfer to a blender or food processor; add cilantro and salt and process until well combined. Taste and adjust seasoning if desired. Set aside.

Masa

1 lb. fresh rendered pork lard
1 ½ lbs. dry masa harina
2 ½ Tbsp. sea salt
1 cup water

Place lard in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat on high until very white and fluffy, about 5 minutes. With the mixer running on low, gradually add half of the masa harina and continue to beat until well combined. Add the salt and ½ cup of the water and continue to beat. Gradually add the remaining masa and then the remaining water. The mixture should resemble mashed potatoes. Test masa by placing a small spoonful in a glass of water. It should float on top when ready. Cover and set aside.

To assemble and finish tamales:

Dry corn husks by spinning in a salad spinner, or shaking well to dispel all water.

Spread 2 to 3 Tbsp. of the masa in a thin layer over the wide part of the husk, leaving a ½-inch margin on either side.

Spoon 1 Tbsp. of the Salsa Verde down the middle of the masa, top with 2 pepper strips, and a piece of cheese. Fold the edges of the husk over so that the dough covers the filling and fold the bottom of the husk up, forming a package that is open at the top. Repeat with remaining masa and husks. Tamales may be finished or frozen at this point. If freezing, thaw prior to cooking.

Place a steamer basket in the bottom of a deep 12-quart pot. Add enough water to come to the bottom of the basket. Place the tamales in the steamer standing with open end up, packed close to each other, but not too tightly, to allow for expansion. Set over low heat and bring water to a boil. Decrease heat to maintain a brisk simmer. If you need to stack a second layer of tamales, allow the bottom layer to cook for 10 minutes to set before you continue stacking. Cover last layer with husks or thick toweling and a tightly fitting lid.

Cook tamales over a brisk heat for 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours, adding water as needed to maintain steam. To test for doneness, remove one of the tamales and tap lightly; it should feel spongy and resilient, and when opened up the dough should separate easily from the husk. Serve immediately. 🍴



THE DISH:

Churros with Dulce de Leche

THE INSPIRATION:

Gabby Mejía and Carla Mejía

I hired Carla Mejía in 2008, when I was working at La Pietra Cucina. She didn't speak much English when she came in to apply for the job. I spoke decent Spanish, and during the interview I learned that Carla's mother was a baker in her native Guatemala. We needed someone to make pastas, ciabatta, and grisini. Carla had worked with bread dough before, so I figured she would be a natural at pasta dough. And she was. I could show her how the dough should feel, and she could replicate it.

About a year later, LPC had expanded and gotten substantially busier. We needed another pasta maker, and Carla brought in her sister, Gabby. When Carla took time off to stay home with her first child, Gabby kept making the pastas.

Carla and Gabby have trained everyone who has made pasta for me over the last five years. They are great at managing schedules and taking ownership of their responsibilities. And they have a feel for any dough. Our twenty-yolk tagliatelle is a great example. It's very eggy and technically difficult to get right. Carla and Gabby turn out egg-based doughs that are consistently exceptional.

Over the years, Carla and Gabby have often brought in sweets from their neighborhood bodega for us to share in the kitchen. So for New South Family Supper, we decided to prepare churros in their honor. We're doing a pâte à choux spiked with nutmeg and lemon zest. We'll serve the churros with a dulce de leche sauce. And colorful sprinkles, because they remind me of Gabby and Carla.

— Bruce Logue, *BoccaLupo*

Guatemalan Churros with Dulce de Leche & Sprinkles

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 6 DOZEN CHURROS

For the dulce de leche:

2 cans sweetened condensed milk

Pour the milk into a stainless steel bowl and cook over a double boiler, stirring occasionally until it reaches a light brown color and has a nutty flavor, approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. You may cook longer if you prefer a deeper level of caramelization. Keep warm.

For the spice mix:

½ cup sugar

2 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. salt

2 Tbsp. rainbow sprinkles

Mix together in a bowl large enough to toss the finished churros.

For the dough:

Peanut oil, for frying

2 cups whole milk

1 cup butter

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour

1 cup semolina

4 Tbsp. sugar

½ tsp. salt

6 whole eggs


Zest of 2 lemons

1 tsp. grated nutmeg

Heat 1 to 2 inches of peanut oil to 365 degrees F in a large, heavy pot or deep fryer.

Place the milk in a medium saucepan, set over medium heat, and bring to a simmer. Add the butter and stir until melted. Add the sugar, salt, semolina, and flour and whisk until combined. Switch to a wooden spoon and beat for 2 minutes. Transfer the mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. With the mixer on low, add eggs one at a time, followed by the lemon zest and nutmeg. Increase speed to medium and beat for 2 minutes. Allow the mixture to cool slightly then transfer to a piping bag with a large star tip. Pipe 10 to 12 (3-inch) pieces of batter into the oil and cut with scissors. Fry until dark brown and crispy, approximately 3 minutes. Drain slightly and then toss in spice mixture.

To serve:

Serve warm churros with a drizzle of dulce de leche or serve dulce de leche on the side for dipping. 

PHOTOS by Lizzy Johnston.

EYEWITNESS

KEYWORD KATRINA_

BLOGGING FROM THE EYE
OF THE STORM

by Cynthia Joyce



BARELY TEN YEARS LATER and it's already impossible to recall with any precision the depths of uncertainty that was life post-Katrina.

For about six months after the storm, my hands shook too hard for me to write down much of anything. I was incredibly grateful to all those who did, to all those who, either professionally or quasi-publicly, struggled to make sense of that dramatically distorted reality. Explaining “what it was like” in the disaster zone post-Katrina was not only difficult—it was constantly required of everyone who lived through it.

Which is why, even though a print collection of online writing might seem to be beside the point, it's worth resurfacing the digital remnants, words that have since been forgotten or lost in a shuffle between servers, relegated forever to Page Not Found status. The Internet, it turns out, is not forever.

This anthology is a cross-section of online-only entries that were written between August 2005 and August 2007, one that reveals a layer of post-Katrina life that wasn't typically picked up by traditional news outlets or preserved in any official record. It's as much a testament to lost memories as it is to memories about what we lost.

Blown apart but finding one another online, evacuees all asked the same questions: When can we go back? Where are my people? Where is the government? Where is the mayor? What about Mardi Gras? Together, professional and do-it-yourself writers created an online text that was immediate, responsive, and specific to the needs of a traumatized community.

Food was a recurring theme in these posts. Bloggers made lists of the foods they missed, of ingredients and dishes they couldn't find outside New Orleans. When people evacuated, they were reminded that the rest of the world didn't eat and drink like they did. “Baton Rouge doesn't know what osso buco is. Baton Rouge sucks,” wrote one frustrated home cook.

When restaurants did reopen, the feeling was one of overwhelming gratitude. It was not a small thing for even the smallest café or convenience store to reopen. If a neighborhood had a place to eat, it could entice families back to rebuild their homes. For returning storm victims, food was sustenance in every sense of the word.

WHAT THE HELL IS WATER? THIS IS WATER.

by Ann Glaviano
Aug. 31, 2005

YES, IT COULD BE WORSE. And that doesn't make this any better. Yesterday I finally got in touch with my Aunt Pattie. They're staying at a hotel off Siegen. She came to visit me at the restaurant, along with Aunt Ellen, Uncle Tim, Cullen, Aunt Shannon, Lee, Kurt, Mimi, and Grandpa—and I kept watching the door for them—and kept waiting for my mom to walk in. I wanted her to. I wanted her to but she never did. Then my family was at the door and I ran across the restaurant and tackled my uncle. Aunt Shannon cried when she saw me.

They'd let me use the office phone to call the hotel. When I got my Aunt Pattie on the phone—this was at about 6 p.m. Tuesday night; the last relative I'd spoken to was my brother at around 10 p.m. Sunday—she signed off our phone conversation saying, “Okay, I'll see you, I'm so glad you called—Mimi and Grandpa are coming—I'll call the restaurant if something changes but I'll see you in a little bit—”

Then she paused and said, “You know everything's gone, right?”

I didn't see the news till Monday night. I knew St. Bernard (where my family lives) would be underwater. I was sitting with Abby, Barrett, Jacob and his cousin and brother—we're from Metairie, the West Bank, Destrehan. We're watching CNN at Barrett's house (Barrett said, “Why is this crap still on?” and Jacob's cousin said, “She hasn't seen it yet”—my house didn't have power, still doesn't) and we're identifying neighborhoods, or trying to, from the helicopter shots—but it all looks like houses and water, houses and water, and that same pan across the Clearview Mall parking lot, Target and Zea's with the roof torn off.

I'm learning the geography of the city from this aerial view. I didn't realize the 17th Street Canal was the one right by my house, at the end of Vets, separating Jefferson and Orleans Parish. All I knew about the 17th Street Canal was that it was between “eight-by-yo-mama's” and “six-pack-a-Dixie” in the “12 Yats of Christmas” song. We're watching CNN and they're talking about the breach in the 17th Street Canal and I sang, “17th Street Canal,” and after a beat, Abby sang, “Dix pack of sixie,” and I was glad to be with a bunch of motherfucking New Orleans refugees right then.

All day yesterday I was so glib because none of it is real. I had a hair appointment on Magazine Street at 1 p.m. today. It wasn't until I was reading the WWL TV forum and watching the live feed online—it wasn't until I saw Blanco crying and Landrieu saying, with great force, “You should get down on your knees”—that's when I lost it. I was alone at Rikki's house doubled over.

Then I went to work.

I cried over cheese and onion enchiladas (the lady said she didn't want the onions) and people were tipping like crazy. Like crazy. You could tell the New Orleans tables, they were the families with little kids and the parents slamming back beer and margaritas. The husband at fifty-three said he wanted chicken quesadillas, eighty-six peppers and onions, and I asked the wife if she wanted the peppers and onions on her quesadillas. She looked at me blurrily and said, “You know, at this point I really don't care,” and I said, “What part of New Orleans are you from?” They were from Kenner. I told her I was from Metairie and hadn't been able to get in touch with my mom, dad, or brother since Sunday; she looked at me like a horrified, sympathetic mother.

The table behind them was from Covington and then the Shackletons sat down at eighty-one when my aunts and uncles left. I wouldn't have known it was them, except the dad was wearing a white polo with St. Catherine of Siena Men's Club embroidered on it. I touched his shirt and said “I *graduated* from there,” and as it turns out, Sydney and Adam are sitting right there, unrecognizable now to me, but I was on Quiz Bowl with Adam when I was an eighth-grade girl and he was a seventh-grade boy, and Sydney was in Michael's class. This is what happens when New Orleans comes to Baton Rouge.

I walked out of work with 120 dollars on a Tuesday night and went

to Chelsea's, where Shuchin bought me a lemon drop, and PJ's friend serendipitously brought out a bourbon and Coke that he didn't want, and then he bought me a tequila shot because I'd never done one and he's from New Orleans and so is PJ and everyone at Chelsea's was a refugee and we toasted to that. I was too drunk to drive home, so Anson brought me to Barrett's, where I showered and slept.

Today I got voicemail messages for the first time since Sunday. My phone hasn't rung in three days. From Dallas, my dad says: "I am safe, please get in touch." From his dorm in Natchitoches, my brother says: "Have you been able to get in touch with Mom, because the first extended is this weekend and, uh, I don't know what I'm doing."

The first extended weekend. I'd completely forgotten. All the LSMSA (Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts) kids are required to leave campus. Michael is supposed to come home for a visit.

I told Barrett, "I've got to figure out a way to get Michael home." He said, "What home?"



WAVES

by Brooks Hamaker
September 12, 2005

IT'S NOT VERY PRETTY, no matter the brush used to paint it.

Tonight, I watched one more endless video stream "live from the mean streets of New Orleans." It occurred to me that, unless you happen to be from New Orleans or have spent a whole lot of time there, there is no way that you can understand what it's like for natives to watch these scenes unfold.

We're scattered across the country, but we scan the same images, looking not for dead bodies or the occasional looter, but trying to identify where in the hell the cameras are pointed. New Orleans has many, many identifiable neighborhoods. In a flash, a native can figure out what part of town is being shown. St. Stephen's Church? That's Napoleon and Magazine. Wagner's Meats (You can't beat our meat!)? That's Claiborne Avenue. Those cars all up and down the middle of the street? People moved them there to keep them out of the water. It usually works. This time, sadly, there may not be anyone to go back and reclaim the car from the neutral ground.

I've spent a great deal of my life (not to mention money) hanging around New Orleans in the thick of the food-and-music scene. So when I see shots of neighborhoods, I think of clubs, restaurants, and bars. Maybe it sounds cold, but the first thing that I thought of when I heard that the water was rising fast in the industrial canal and flooding the Ninth Ward was what would happen to the Saturn Bar, St. Roch Cemetery, and the Captain's Houses.

When the 17th Street Canal broke, I heard about it on local radio station WWL. Loyal and attentive listeners were told that the canal had

broken “right behind Deanie’s on the City Park side,” and that “Sid Mar’s had washed through the hole.” A foreigner listening to the radio might not make much sense of that, but if you were from New Orleans, you knew exactly where they were talking about.

Another long shot of Rampart Street: The cameras cross over Treme, going for one more long, too-often repeated shot of the Vieux Carré. Look down and see the Municipal Auditorium, WWOZ, Peristyle, Mama Rosa’s, and the Funky Butt. All of these places have gotten my time and money over the years. I saw Van Morrison, The New Orleans Brass, and Harrah’s Temporary Casino in the Auditorium. I remember when OZ was on top of Tipitina’s at Tchoupitoulas and Napoleon, and when it moved to Armstrong Park. I listened to late-night shows with back-to-back appearances by J Monque’d and Ernie K. Doe (one of the wildest nights in regularly scheduled radio history. The tapes are still traded among those in the know.) I remember (though not very clearly) stumbling down St. Louis Street from the Funky Butt after a long night of real jazz with Astral Project, or the Dozen, or any of dozens of the unsung and underpaid heroes of the New Orleans music scene.



As the water rose, many of us mentally checked off the streets that held our favorite restaurants and clubs. Not only would we be very unlikely to be eating there or listening to music there any time soon, but we wondered what was going on with the people who had worked there. With the exception of a lucky few, most people in New Orleans have been born and raised living hand-to-mouth—including the owners of many of the funky little dives that tourists often fall in love with. And if the owners aren’t getting rich, think about your waitress, or the guy who washes the dishes, or parks your car, or carries your bag. These folks didn’t live where tourists often travel, but they had homes just like you and me, and the areas that they lived in have been among the most severely affected. Many of these people have left New Orleans for good—but the ones that return? Man, will they have some stories to tell. Epic tales of long trips, hardship, strange customs in stranger lands, and finally of their triumphant return to the City that Care Forgot (no moniker could be more accurate at the moment). That’s what I am waiting on. Those stories.

I’m waiting to drive in on Friday afternoon, weary from a long day at work but not so tired that I am willing to pay the parking thieves for one of their little spots. I will circle around on Esplanade, make the turn onto Chartres, and head back to Frenchman Street, looking for a free spot in the block behind Doerr Furniture, just past Santa Fe Restaurant. I’ll grab my stuff, double-check to make sure I didn’t leave anything in the car that I might ever want again, and stroll off down Frenchman: past Snug Harbor, Café Brasil, Mona’s, the Praline Connection, a cool tattoo parlor that tempts me every time I go by it, and finally out of the Faubourg past Checkpoint Charlie’s. I’ll cross Esplanade and make a right. On down to Royal Street and into the Quarter, past the block of residential property, past the Golden Lantern (Home of the Mr. Leather Contest, where I was once the celebrity “straight” judge), Bennachin African Restaurant, Mona Lisa’s, and into the Verti Marte. I’ll get a newspaper, a quart of milk, a couple of bottles of club soda, a couple of Hubig’s pies (lemon, thanks) and a pint of whatever Ben and Jerry’s looks right. I’ll go outside, walk across the street, unlock the door, and walk into the courtyard, marveling as I always do at the fact that it’s been there so long and looked so much the same all these many years.

Once I put my things up, I’ll head back, tripping down Gov. Nicholls to Decatur and through the French Market. Over to the Moonwalk, all the way down the river, past the Aquarium. There, I’ll

walk over and ask where my son's brick is (I never can remember where that damn thing is). Once I satisfy myself that it's still there, I'll walk a few blocks down Canal and make the right back into the Quarter onto Royal. I'll probably check in at the Monteleone, just to make sure that the Carousel is still going 'round, and then I'll go past the Supreme Court Building (formerly known as the Wildlife and Fisheries building, formerly known as the old Supreme Court Building—this is a very complicated structure), past the folks lining up for dinner at Brennan's that evening, past the antique stores, the cool old gun shop, the Rib Room in the bottom of the Royal Orleans (maybe they will enlarge the rooms, finally, as they redo it), and then, just before I get home, I'll stop in at PJ's and get a large iced coffee to go. A real iced coffee, made the way that apparently no one else in the Deep South knows how to make it—big go cup, ice, dark-roast coffee (no chicory, no cow, thanks). And then I'll go back home and put my feet up and watch WWL as they report on the latest Saints disaster.

Many of the places I have mentioned might be unfamiliar to you, but if you have ever been to New Orleans—even once—others were not. I know you pictured those landmarks, along with what were once unremarkable places, and you remembered that trip. You might have a photo on your wall of you and some loved one standing in front of General Jackson with St. Louis Cathedral in the background. Or maybe, on some shelf, you have a hurricane glass from Pat O's filled with change. Maybe it's a string or two of hard-earned Mardi Gras beads hanging from a rearview, or a couple of Carnival doubloons tucked into a dresser drawer. A ticket from the Superbowl or the Final Four pinned behind a Superdome magnet on your fridge. No matter the souvenir you chose to keep from your visit, one thing is sure, you left part of your heart in New Orleans. We can't wait until you can come back and try to find it. 🍷

Excerpted from Please Forward: How Blogging Reconnected New Orleans after Katrina, edited by Cynthia Joyce. Forthcoming from University of New Orleans Press in August 2015. Reprinted with permission. PHOTO, PAGE 51, jazz funeral for chef Austin Leslie, October 9, 2005, by Chris Granger. PHOTO, PAGE 54, by James Allenspach. PHOTO, PAGE 56, by Amy C. Evans.



TO LIVE AND DINE IN DIXIE

THE EVOLUTION OF
URBAN FOOD CULTURE IN
THE JIM CROW SOUTH

ANGELA JILL COOLEY

COMING MAY 15 FROM UGA PRESS

ABOUT GRAVY

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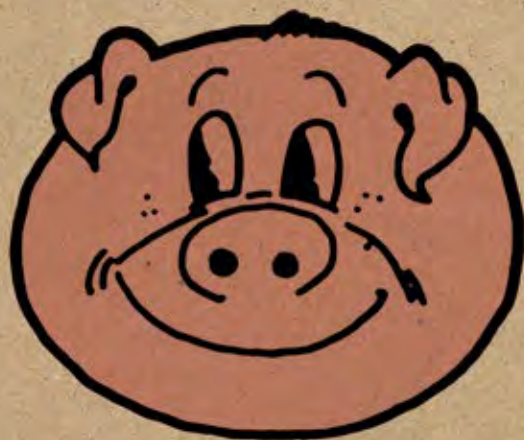
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