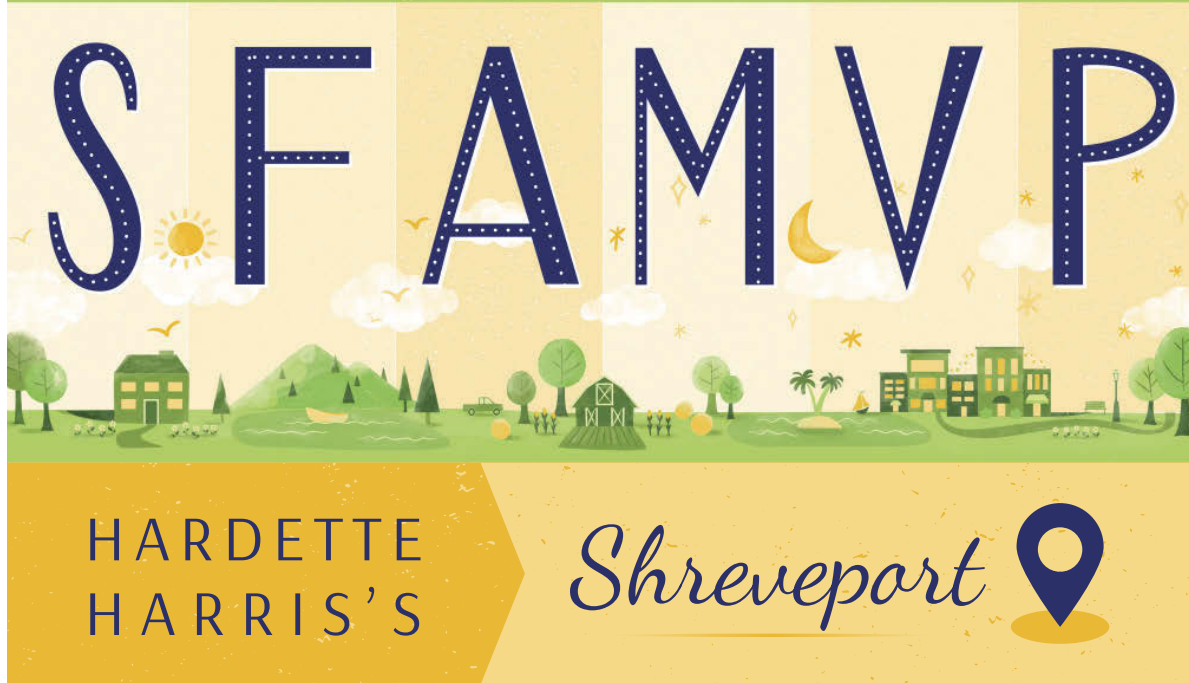


Southern Foodways Alliance Most Visited Places



HARDETTE HARRIS GREW UP IN MINDEN, LOUISIANA, ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES EAST OF Shreveport. “People think we’re closer to New Orleans,” she says. “We’re not. We’re up north.” She moved to Houston, Texas, after high school and worked for a decade as a civilian in the Houston Police Department. Meanwhile, she went to culinary school. She spent several years as a private chef before returning home in 2013 to care for her aging parents. That’s when she noticed something: “North Louisiana had adopted southern Louisiana cuisine as ours. But we have our own foodways and culinary traditions in the northern part of Louisiana.” Harris began a dinner series celebrating north Louisiana cuisine—including freshwater fish and local produce—which ultimately became her business, Us Up North.



Us Up North

I made a name for myself locally by cooking a meal that the city declared the “official meal of north Louisiana.” It included potato salad, pinto beans, rice and gravy, mustard greens, and more. Right now, I have pop-ups. I book culinary experiences for groups. I want the business to be a what’s-on-the-stove sort of thing—like if you went to your grandmother’s house in the country. My customers’ favorites are the greens and fried catfish.



Mahaffey Farms

Mahaffey Farms raises red wattle hogs. The owner, Evan McCommon, has taken an interest in my work from the beginning. I'll take whatever meat or produce he has. They have a farm store now, and you can go in and get all the food they produce. They have an Airbnb on the family property, and you hear animals when you wake up. It's warm and welcoming—one of my favorite places.

Milam Street Kitchen Incubator

MS KICK, as it's called, is sponsored by Southern University at Shreveport. I serve on the advisory board. The tenants have awesome food: Caribbean, barbecue, pistolettes, vegan. These are small businesses that work hard to give you the best of what they offer. Vegans on the Run—I love their nachos. Big Nate's BBQ is the best barbecue in the city. The Smoking Oyster does grilled oysters. It's just a wonderful place for Shreveport.



The Cross Lake Maison

A friend of mine owns a vacation rental on Cross Lake, outside of the city. It's affordable, cute—all of those great things you look for in a rental. And there's freshwater fishing right there. You don't hear anything but what's on the water. They have fishing poles. You can go outside in your pajamas and fish, then come back inside and fry it.



Illustrations by Bridgette Blanton / Tiny Pencil Studio

Most Visited Places is an ongoing digital and print series underwritten by The Mountain Valley Spring Water.