

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." 🍷

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## 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.



Serafín 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 Serafín’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 Serafín

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. 

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PHOTOS by Lizzy Johnston.