

Me oh my oh, taste New Orleans with callas and shrimp etouffee

Here are a few traditional recipes from Bruce Konowalow you may like to try. See his related column on Taste front.

Before the beignet took over as the favorite breakfast treat, the callas or rice cake reigned supreme. Traditionalists prefer the callas to the beignet. This recipe is the real thing, provided by Poppy Tooker of the "Slow Food" movement, a group that is trying to preserve traditional recipes and agricultural methods.

CALLAS

- 2 cups cold cooked rice
- 6 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 whole eggs

Beat eggs and mix all ingredients into a thick batter. Heat vegetable oil to 350° F in a heavy sauté pan or pot. Drop mix by the tablespoon into the hot oil. Fry on both sides to a golden brown. Drain and dust with powdered sugar. Serve with coffee or *café au lait*, made with half coffee and half steamed milk.

SHRIMP ETOUFFEE

- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon Cajun spice blend (Can be purchased in grocery store. If blend has salt in it, eliminate salt in recipe. Look for Chef Paul's Louisiana Cajun Mix.)
- 7 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 cup small diced onions
- 1/4 cup small diced celery

- 1/4 cup small diced bell pepper
- 7 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup flour
- 3 cups fish stock or unsalted clam broth (The dish will taste better if you use fresh fish stock)
- 1 stick (4 ounces) sweet butter
- 2 pounds, peeled and deveined shrimp
- 1 cup of fine chopped scallions

Combine salt, pepper and Cajun spice and set in small bowl. In a large heavy-bottomed skillet heat the oil until it begins to smoke. Add the flour slowly and incorporate with a wooden spoon. Cook for 3-4 minutes until it turns reddish brown. Remove from the heat and add the celery, onions and bell pepper (these three vegetables are known as the "holy trinity" in Cajun cooking). Add 1 tablespoon of the seasoning mix and stir mixture until cooled.

In a separate saucepot bring 3 cups of the stock to boil over high heat. Add hot stock to skillet with flour and oil mixture over moderate heat and whisk in until the mixture is blended in. The mixture must come just up to the boiling point to thicken properly.

Simmer (a very low boil) the thickened liquid for 5 minutes. Be careful not to scorch the bottom. Stir the liquid constantly with a wooden spoon.

In a separate sauté pan melt the stick of butter over moderate heat. Sauté the shrimp in the butter. Sprinkle shrimp with the remaining seasoning mix. Sauté shrimp for 3 minutes.

Add cooked shrimp with butter to the thickened stock. Mix vigorously with a wooden spoon to incorporate butter into the sauce. If butter does not blend well or if the sauce is too thick, add a little more stock. Mix well and adjust the seasoning if necessary. The consistency of the sauce should be such that it can evenly coat the back of a spoon.

Serve over white rice. Garnish with chopped scallions. Serves 6-8.

Spice up dinner with sausage

Recipes courtesy of "Bruce Aidells' Complete Sausage Book," by Bruce Aidells and Denis Kelly, (Ten Speed Press, 2000, \$21.95). See related story on Taste front.

(Note: Taste Editor Ken Abramczyk tried the first two recipes without adding the back fat, and instead used a little from the pork butt itself, for about an 86/15 percent ratio of meat to fat. While it isn't as "juicy" (fatty) as a commercial brand, it certainly is a lot healthier.)

Meat grinders are equipped with at least two different width sizes of 1/4-inch or 3/8-inch to vary the meat texture between coarse and fine. Read those instructions to accompany these recipes before making sausage. When kneading the mixture, be careful not to overmix or the meat may take on a white, fatty appearance.

Be sure to wash hands and kitchen counters and door handles thoroughly when handling raw pork or chicken.)

KIELBASA

- 2 1/4 pounds pork butt
- 3/4 pound pork back fat
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- 2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander

Medium hog casings (ask your butcher or inquire at local market).

Grind the meat and fat together through a 1/4-inch plate. In a large bowl, mix the ground meat with the water, garlic, salt, marjoram, pepper, mustard and coriander. Knead the mixture until everything is well blended.

Stuff into medium hog casings, and tie into 6-inch links.

The sausage will keep in the refrigerator for 3 days, or in the freezer for up to 2 months.

ITALIAN SWEET FENNEL SAUSAGE

- 3 pounds pork butt
- 3/4 pound pork back fat
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- Medium hog casings (optional)

Grind the pork and fat together through a 3/8-inch plate. In a large bowl, combine the pork and fat with the wine, garlic, fennel, black pepper, salt, oregano, and allspice. Mix well with your hands.

Shape into patties, or stuff into casings and tie into 6-inch links.

The sausage will keep for 3 days in the refrigerator, or for 2 months in the freezer.

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(called PoBoy) sandwiches and the New Orleans version of the Italian here called the muffaletta.

There were fresh hot beignets (a fried pillow of sweet dough dusted with powdered sugar) and *café au lait* for breakfast. Dinners included gumbo, shrimp dishes and the ubiquitous etouffees. There was even

(heaven forbid) a vegetarian lunch at a quaint cafe in the French Quarter.

Of honorable mention was a new restaurant owned by the Brennan clan called the Palace Cafe.

They served modern, original Creole cuisine in an inviting atmosphere that included an open kitchen and excellent service. Their andouille-crusted fish and molasses-coated ducking were both excellent.

White chocolate bread pudding was simple and satisfying.

New Orleans is one of those cities that you could eat in a different restaurant every night for

a year and not have to repeat. I can't wait until next year and pick up where I left off.

Bruce Konowalow is the director of the Culinary Arts Department at Schoolcraft College and a Taste columnist. A former director of the New York Restaurant School in New York City, Konowalow was appointed director at Schoolcraft in May.

If you have a cooking question for Konowalow, please drop him a line, courtesy of Ken Abramczyk, Taste Editor, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or kabramczyk@oc.homecom.net

See related recipes on D2.

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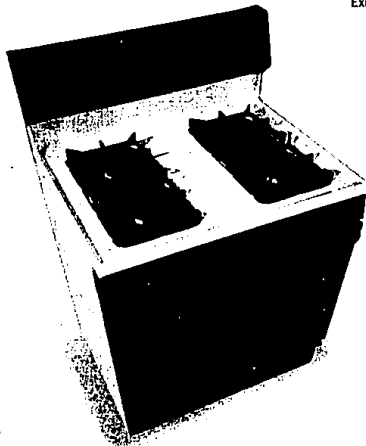
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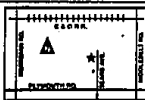
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