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Donny Rouse & Donald Rouse

COFFEE TALK

In most of the world, the ritual of drinking coffee doesn't begin until adulthood. But in this part of the country, we usually start drinking "coffee milk" as youngsters. Still, coffee is something that most of us associate with adults, and especially with our own parents.

Now that I'm a father, I've become more nostalgic. And I have even more appreciation for my parents. I don't wait for a special day to tell them, but I always make an extra effort on their respective holidays.

Mother's Day is the busiest restaurant day of the year but — or maybe because of that — my mom always chooses a home-cooked meal over going out. I'm no slouch in the kitchen, but my mother is the best cook in the world (I bet you say the same thing about *your* mom), so the pressure is on. Usually we grill or boil seafood — two of my specialties. It's her day but Mom still makes dessert — you haven't had bread pudding until you've had *her* bread pudding. It's best washed down with some good strong Louisiana coffee. I always bring flowers.

My kids and I have our own Mother's Day traditions, which start with breakfast in bed with coffee and all my wife's favorites, courtesy of the kids. My wife, Kara, also gets homemade cards and a special Mother's Day cake. The kids go to Rouses the day before to decorate it. I handle dinner and clean up.

As for Father's Day, do others really buy ties for their dads? In my family, every celebration revolves around food, including Father's Day. My dad and I both like to fish and hunt. Dad isn't one for gifts, but I never arrive empty-handed. It can be a bottle of his favorite bourbon, a fishing reel or the latest drawings from his grandkids. But it's mostly about the time spent together, the meal savored, the dessert and coffee to cap the celebration.

It's easy to get hung up on looking for just the right present for Christmas, Valentine's Day and birthdays, but Mother's Day and Father's Day really are about just spending time together.

Donny Rouse, CEO
3rd Generation

➤ On the Cover

Crescent Dragonwagon's Blueberry Coffee Cake. See story page 18.

photo by Romney Caruso

MOTHER'S DAY IS SUNDAY, MAY 14

Our cake decorators will help your child decorate a special cake for Mother's Day. Join us on Saturday, May 13. We'll have small cakes ready for the kids to decorate.

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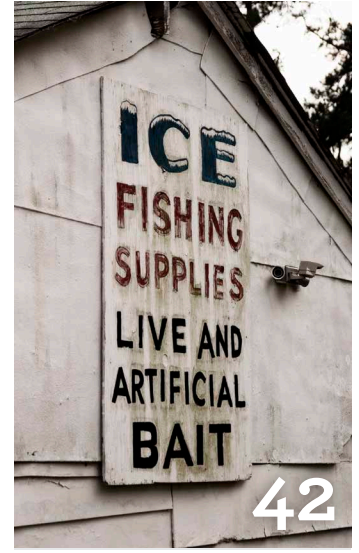
Research shows that more than 20 percent of parents have skipped meals or gone without food to feed their children. I encourage you to join us and help fight hunger by supporting Feeding America with a donation of nonperishable food or money at any Rouses Market.

"One of my memories from growing up is having coffee milk with my Granny Rouse. She would have all the girl granddaughters over for sleepovers. We would play in the backyard, come in, get bathed and play cards. In the morning she would make 'lost bread' (French toast) and let us drink coffee with her (though it was mostly milk, I believe!)."

—Ali Rouse Royster, 3rd Generation

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Rouses is proud to partner with LSU Athletics to support LSU Tigers Baseball. Go Tigers!

MY ROUSES

Every Rouses Market is as unique as the customers and team members who shop and work there. We asked you on Facebook to pick your favorite Rouses. Each store got multiple votes. Here's a sampling of your responses.

I ♥ the Rouses on Airline and Duplessis in Prairieville. Being from NOLA, I always used to shop at Rouses, but when we moved to Ascension, there wasn't one close by. I'm so excited that there are several in the area now. Y'all have done a wonderful job with the transition. Keep up the great work!!
—T. Howell

Rouses in Gonzales has my heart! I love how clean and upbeat the store is. It makes planning a meal (or picking up from the deli) a breeze!!
—M. Callegan

I call the Rouses on Baronne the "sexy Rouses" because it fits the neighborhood. I love the vibe, and the employees are awesome!!
—S. Nolan

Mobile Rouses #51 on Old Shell. I visit twice a week (at least) — my family calls it my second home.
—D. Hubbel

The Tchoupitoulas Rouses is my happy place!
—M. DeBarge

Love the new remodeled store on Grand Caillou Rd. in Houma.
—M. Boudreaux

I love the ladies in the deli at the Rouses in Plaquemine.
—N. Christensen

I love my Rouses in Larose/Cut Off. They all greet you with a "Hello, Welcome to Rouses."
—K. Blanchard

Gulf Shores is where I shop for all the great things that can't be found anywhere else. Also, I tell tourists to shop in your seafood department — it's fresh and local. Oh, and the best sushi too!
—J. Adams

Rouses in Youngsville sets the standard of excellence for a local high-quality shopping experience.
—B. Harrison

Rouses on Johnston in Lafayette. Everyone is friendly and the food is always fresh! Not to mention the bakery smells and tastes wonderful!!!
—H. Turner

Clearview and W. Metairie. They are always so nice.
—K. Lopez

Denham Springs is the best! Thanks for coming back after the flood. Your support for the local community is very much appreciated. I particularly like the meat department and the bakery. Both have "saved" me on occasion when I'm running late and need to get supper on the table or a cake for a birthday.
—J. Garrison

I am so happy to have Rouses in Ocean Springs. It was very hard leaving Louisiana last year to move to Mississippi, but I found a little bit of home at my Rouses in Ocean Springs! I can find all of my Cajun specialties there.
—D. Taddlock

Love it!! I shop at Rouses in Gretna on Westbank Expressway! It is so nice and clean and a great place to stop for lunch!
—W. Sandra

Love the Morgan City Rouses. It's the best store in Louisiana and always has the freshest vegetables and the best cuts of meat anywhere.
—D. Hill

The Epicurean on St. Charles in Houma is my lifesaver! Special foods to meet my dietary needs without having to go to New Orleans. Thank you!
—A. Melancon

Love my Rouses in Mobile, Alabama! Best grocery store in Mobile!
—D. Phillips

I love my Rouses Epicurean on North Canal Blvd. I can find everything I need there, and their lunches and cakes are the best!
—A. Blanchard

I frequent the Rouses in Zachary. Great store with friendly employees.
—A. Canal

I shop at all the Rouses Markets. They are all so friendly and will help you with anything that you need. They will help you find an item if you can't find it. It's my favorite place to shop.
—T. Landry

I don't have one favorite Rouses, I love them all. Wherever I am, and there's a Rouses, I am there shopping!
—T. Henry

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Cajun Coffee

by Marcelle Bienvenu

Every morning of my childhood, I awoke to the aroma of coffee brewing. More often than not, it was my mother who heated up the kettle and spooned dark roast, pure coffee into her white enamelware French drip coffeepot. When the kettle whistled, announcing that the water was boiling, she patiently spooned the hot water into the top of the pot, waiting as the water slowly seeped through the coffee grounds. It required the patience of Job. The first pot was consumed in a plain white demitasse (a small coffee cup) by Mama and Papa in the quiet of the kitchen, then the procedure was repeated before my siblings and I were roused from our beds. Our demitasse of coffee had a demitasse

coffee spoonful of raw sugar (from a nearby sugar mill) and a drizzle of warmed, canned Carnation® brand evaporated milk.

There were times when coffee milk (*café au lait*) was consumed. Again, only pure dark roast coffee (no chicory) was combined with hot milk or cream to pour over a bowl of *couche-couche* (fried cornmeal). Of course, it was always a treat to indulge in beignets and *café au lait* at *Café de Monde* when we visited New Orleans, although I found the coffee with chicory a bit bitter for my taste.

We eventually did graduate to a larger coffeepot, which allowed Mama to brew only *one* pot per day, but we continued to have demitasse portions. There was nary a

coffee mug to be found in Mama's cabinets. The coffee was strong (almost akin to espresso), and Mama alleged that no one could have an entire mug of the syrupy brew, else their hair would stand on end. We *never* had any kind of electric coffeepot in the house.

According to the authors (of which I am one) of *Stir the Pot: the History of Cajun Cuisine*, "Coffee is one of the foundations of traditional Cajun foodways." Anyone who came for a visit was offered a demitasse of coffee. In fact, I remember Mama having a small tray on the counter that was always set with two or three of the plain white demitasse cups, a small sugar bowl and a creamer ready for service at any time.



“When the kettle whistled, announcing that the water was boiling, she patiently spooned the hot water into the top of the pot, waiting as the water slowly seeped through the coffee grounds. It required the patience of Job.”

Mama and her circle of friends had coffee parties (sometimes referred to as tea parties, although I never saw any kind of tea being served) to honor a bride-to-be, a debutante or a Carnival queen. For these, they really put on a show. Aunt Eva’s sterling silver coffee service (coffeepot, creamer, sugar bowl and tray) would be put into use. Dainty finger sandwiches, small sugar cookies (*ti gateau sec*) and *tassies* (miniature pecan pies) were passed around on small trays by “tea girls,” who usually were the “tweenage” children of the hostesses. (I was pressed into this service too many times to count.)

Once or twice a week, these ladies gathered for informal, mid-afternoon coffee chitchats in the kitchen. I often helped Mama with this service and loved hearing the local gossip. Conversation was usually about recent events, family and the weather. Many times, coffee time lingered into the cocktail hour, when Papa arrived home and the ladies’ husbands came to join their spouses for highballs.

In the book *Stir the Pot*, it is noted that “During the early twentieth century, several coffee companies offered pre-packaged processed coffee to the Cajun community in south Louisiana. Baton Rouge-based Community Coffee, founded in 1919, served the eastern fringes of Cajun country until the company expanded its distribution network across the Atchafalaya Basin.” Other coffee brands such as Creole

Belle and Mello Joy also offered pre-roasted coffee grounds to customers in what is now the Acadiana region. Mello Joy was founded in 1936 by brothers Louis and Will Begnaud, who worked for the Grimmer Coffee Company, makers of Creole Belle. It was brewed for years before a hiatus in 1976, then revived in 2000.

Of course, now there are Community Coffee’s CC’s, New Orleans-based PJ’s, Starbucks and independent coffeehouses just about everywhere!

Coffee drinking has continued to be a very social occurrence, but I cringe when I see customers ordering all sorts of flavored coffees in cups as big as Mama’s coffeepot (which I still have). There are times when I have an *envie* (a strong desire) for a cup of coffee with friends. When that happens, I pull out Mama’s precious demitasses and saucers, *and* a few of her silver demitasse spoons, as well as her crystal creamer and sugar bowl, and make some sugar cookies before calling my girl pals to join me “for coffee.” ■

Of course, Mama also had a cabinet filled with her prized collection of dainty porcelain demitasse cups and saucers, crystal sugar bowls, creamers and a collection of demitasse spoons she had amassed from her travels. These were put to use when the occasion arose to serve “high coffee” to company (not for the immediate family). For such an event, coffee was made in the kitchen but served to the guests in the living room. A tray set with the best demitasse cups and saucers was brought to the guests, sometimes by a daughter thrust into service. (I had to learn how to balance these trays before I was 10 years old.) Sometimes, a piece of cake or a slice of sweet dough pie was offered as well.



➤ **Ragin’ Cajuns French Roast**

Ragin’ Cajuns French Roast Coffee is a blend of Central and South American beans. It is produced by Mello Joy in partnership with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.



The whole ceremony only took a few seconds, but for a first grader, it felt like a whole new world opening up. Once the little porcelain cup hit the kitchen table, you felt like you'd stepped through Alice's looking glass, where you had your first taste of adult life. You could do all the things you watched the Tall Folks do your whole life. Stir tiny spoons of sugar into the frothed milk, wait a few minutes for the cup to cool. Look around to your aunts and uncles as they sipped *their* coffee. And feel like it's a whole new world.

For the adults, it's another thing altogether — a little magic trick that gives a kid credit for attentiveness. It acknowledges the passage of time, with minimal downside. Since Mama controls the pour, the first forays tend to be composed of *way* more milk than coffee — the better to keep ambient caffeine at micro-dose levels

In South Louisiana, coffee culture often starts with the toddlers. Ask any native of Acadiana or New Orleans when they had their first cup of coffee, and the answer will likely be closer to kindergarten than all-nighter maintenance during college freshman exams, when most Americans first encounter coffee.

In the days before the modern “espresso everywhere” movement, a kid's first cup of coffee would be more of a family thing — a little rite of passage served in a tiny porcelain cup.

That's the way it happened in my grandmother's house, anyway. Once a child expressed interest in adult daybreak rituals (reading the morning paper, sprinkling hot sauce on scrambled eggs), they'd invariably answer the general question (“*What do you need, baby?*”) with a not-unexpected request (“*May I have some coffee, please?*”).

There are, of course, different parental approaches to this particular teaching moment. The first is to give them exactly what they asked for: a fully caffeinated, weapons-grade cup of steaming joe that's dark as night, thick as tar and bitter as can be. No sugar, no cream, poured straight from the French drip pot on the stovetop. One sip of this adult stuff and that child will likely steer clear of coffee (and most other adult enterprises) for 20 years, minimum.

But for children raised in Louisiana's *au lait* tradition, there's another approach that's keeping the coffee culture thriving — an appropriately made cup of “coffee milk.”

To a child, the “coffee milk” process looks nearly identical to the grown-up ritual. First, Mama would take down from the cabinet one of her demitasse cups (a bit fancy, but just the right size for little hands), pour a whisper of French drip coffee from the well-worn aluminum pot, and fill the cup the rest of the way with scalded milk from the tiny dented pot on the stovetop's back burner. She'd walk it over to you and gently place the cup, saucer and tiny spoon on your placemat.

— that would grow stronger over time.

By the time high-school rolls around, the kids have joined the ranks of full-fledged coffee drinkers, downing a quick morning cup on the way out the door. Eventually, they ease into adulthood with a solid routine based on a meditative morning cup and an occasional mid-afternoon espresso drink at a sidewalk café. And when they sip their *caffè latte*, they might giggle at the fact that it's just coffee milk by another name, without the tiny porcelain cup.

And if *those* kids have kids, they'll get to pass the tradition and memories along with their own personal twist on the ritual.

Years ago, I watched the family custom jump a generation as my 4-year-old nephew, not long out of his high-chair days, looked up from his breakfast and shouted at my sister: “Mama. Mama. *Mama!*”

“What do you need, sweetie?” she asked.

“*Baby* coffee...” he said with a little smile.

My sister, now the mama, looked at him and said, “Okay, baby...”

And I watched her do the trick — a quick, pantomimed pour of imaginary coffee, a cup of warm milk and a little gift of maturity.

He took a long sip from the tiny cup and beamed, feeling like a teeny-tiny grown-up. ■



➤ **Kleinpeter Farms Dairy**

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-maddy & alex

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Coffee, Tea & Me

by Crescent Dragonwagon

People have different relationships with particular beverages, especially hot caffeinated ones. Some have a precise ritual that they cleave to with the utmost fidelity. We *must* have our coffee (or tea). It *must* be black (or awash with half-and-half). It *must* be prepared first thing in the morning (or late afternoon). To those who are monogamous in beverage devotion, deviation is as disturbing as if the sun started to rise, changed its mind, and went back down again, sinking in the east at about, say, 9:00 a.m.

Others play more loosely with liquid loyalties. I am in this second category. To call us fickle would be unkind; we are flexible, spontaneous. What we want to drink varies by circumstance. I respect daily beverage rituals (I keep a Chemex® for my boyfriend's must-have morning coffee), but do not share them.

"Breaking bread" is shorthand for something more intimate than a meeting. But thirst is even more urgent than sustenance.

Here are two stories of thirst-quenching in countries where I was a guest, and one at home, where I provided the hospitality. And a slightly surprising recipe that has, over the years, pleased and hydrated many.

Café au Lait in a Suburb of Paris

For two weeks in 1991, I lived in a tiny, noisy apartment above an unpretentious bar-café just outside of Paris. I'd come downstairs every morning, walk down the street to the newsstand to get a *Herald-Tribune* (ever the friend of American ex-pats, the *Herald-Tribune* met its demise, sadly, in 2014) and sit at the bar. The laconic — one might say gruff — owner, who

was usually in the back, would emerge to bring me café au lait, in a large bowl, and a croissant. I had the place to myself, just me and the *Trib*. Other customers arrived at noon and stayed, growing in number until the wee hours.

The air, in both my apartment and the café, was fumed with coffee, sometimes simmering chicken, but mostly smoke. The place was permeated with decades of Gitanes.

It happened that in the middle of those two weeks, a national ban on smoking in restaurants was instituted. By and large, the French were outraged. (Many were devoted smokers; most were notably anti-authoritarian: As De Gaulle once famously remarked, "How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese?")

With an exaggerated, what-can-you-do shrug, the owner put up a sign — hand-lettered, on cardboard — that said, "*Défense de Fumer.*"

One morning, a day later, another customer walked in; a woman, much better dressed than I was, in heels and a suit. She asked me where the owner was; I replied, in my rudimentary French, that he was *à l'arrière* and would return shortly. She sat at the bar, a couple of seats away from me, drumming her fingers restlessly.

Then she noticed the new sign above the bar and expelled her breath sharply.

"Oooof," she said. "*C'est ridicule, non?*"

She then dragged the barstool behind the counter, climbed atop it (heels and all), reached above the bottles of liquor, and pulled the sign down. She didn't even wait until she was back on the floor to decisively rip it in half. She climbed down, walked to the trash can behind the bar, dropped in the halves of the destroyed sign, returned to the barstool, and sat back down, giving me a triumphant nod — which I interpreted as, "So there."

Then she lit a Gitane.

The owner reappeared, glanced at the cigarette being smoked by his new customer, glanced up at where his sign had been, gave his own miniature double-take, and shrugged.

The woman ordered a café au lait too.

To this day, when I order one — now Italian/Starbucked as *latte* — I hear the decisive rip of cardboard.

Tea in Trivandrum

If I wanted to walk the crowded streets of that busy South Indian city and not be stared at back in the days before tech, call centers and lots of international travel, I wore a sari and carried an umbrella — not because it was raining, but to protect my skin from the fierce sun, as many natives did. Except, in my case, I was also protected from second glances; my foreignness invariably surprised the locals. Trivandrum is surrounded by tea plantations; tea was and is

important to the economy. I was there only a couple of days; naturally I went exploring, looking for a tea shop. I found one that was primarily a wholesaler, with countless burlap-wrapped bales of tea stacked in front and behind it. Still, there was a small room with one table and a few chairs. I sat, closing the umbrella, revealing my white-skinned, blue-eyed, redheaded self.

The waiter, a young man, was polite, but like everyone else, he stared; not in an unfriendly but a curious way. He came to take my order. Tea, of course, Indian-style: scalding hot, very strong, milky, sweet. (Not spiced, like the now-ubiquitous “chai”; “chai” was simply hot milky sweet tea. If you wanted it with cardamom, ginger and black pepper, you ordered “masala chai”).

The waiter brought back that invigorating cup (why does no place in the world but India get tea hot enough?). He lingered.

“Where you are from?” he asked.

“America,” I said.

“Last year someone from America is coming here!” he told me. “She is from Cal-i-fornia.” Then he gave a fond sigh.

“Su-san,” he explained. He looked at me hopefully.

“I don’t think,” I said carefully, “that I know her.”

Surely he was aware that the odds of Susan and I being acquaintances were slim. And yet two unaccompanied white American women had both wondered into his tea stall. So, it could have been possible.

Because, as travel — and for that matter life — teaches you, anything is.

A Southern Sip for Sultry Days

As I’ve mentioned elsewhere in this magazine, I once owned an inn in Arkansas. The town in which it was located was not near *anywhere*. Guests drove in, usually arriving in late afternoon. My late husband and I caught on quickly to the fact that most of them arrived dehydrated. Too, the town’s charm lay in its disorienting out-of-time flavor; it was quite possible to get lost, literally or metaphorically.

Our M.O. became to get guests to their rooms as quickly as possible, where refreshments (beverages and cookies) awaited them. Then, reinvigorated, they could come find us at the front desk.

We offered hot apple cider in cold weather. But what should the hot weather beverage be?

As we knew from serving breakfast and dinner, most wanted hot, high-octane coffee in the morning and decaf at night. That left out conventional caffeinated iced tea — sweetened or otherwise. And speaking of sweetness: We wanted something that wasn’t sugary. That left out lemonade.

Thus, Iced Herbal Cooler was born.

Made with tart hibiscus plus rose hips (easily found in Red Zinger® type teas), it was sweetened with thawed frozen apple juice concentrate and a little fresh-squeezed orange juice. Plus, it was lovely: Hibiscus tea is bright red — as red as the liquid for hummingbird feeders. We decanted it into quart mason jars, garnished with citrus slices and fresh mint.

“You’ll find a nice pitcher of Iced Herbal Cooler in the mini-fridge, to go with your cookies,” I’d say. I tried for a welcoming, “There, there” tone, sympathetic and comforting; I had, in other places, been a stranger, thirsty, hungry, desperate to pee.

I did have one tired guest look at me, startled. “Did you say,” she asked me, “Iced Gerbil Cooler?”

Well. Our Iced Herbal Cooler (absolutely gerbil-free) was so well-loved we eventually made a postcard of it, with the recipe on the back. Here it is. ■

Dairy Hollow House’s Famous Iced Herbal Cooler

Makes about 6½ cups concentrated tea, making about 8 tall glasses when garnished and served over ice.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

FOR COOLER

Water (use bottled spring water if your tap water doesn’t taste good)

- 1 box (20 bags) of Red Zinger, Raspberry Zinger, or other hibiscus- and rose hip-based herbal tea (read ingredient list on the box)
- 1 12-ounce container frozen apple juice concentrate, no sugar added, thawed and undiluted
- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice (from about 4 oranges)

FOR GARNISH

Ice
Sliced rounds of orange
Sliced half-rounds of lemon and lime
Sprigs of fresh mint

HOW TO PREP

Bring 4 cups (1 quart) water to a hard boil. Turn off heat and drop in all 20 tea bags. Let steep until liquid is at room temperature (tea can even steep overnight).

Fish out the tea bags, squeezing them with clean hands to get every last drop of flavor.

Stir in the thawed, undiluted apple juice concentrate and fresh orange juice, along with an additional cup of cold water.

Transfer to a glass pitcher.

When ready to serve, set out glasses and put a slice each of orange, lemon and lime in each glass, along with a sprig of mint. Then fill glasses with ice. Pour cooler over ice and let stand briefly (cooler is quite concentrated, but the ice dilutes it just right).





Coffee
CUPPING

by Wayne Curtis

Here's a list of people you don't want sitting in the cubicle next to you at work: Brad, Jeremy, Mike, Sharon and Will. They're all coffee traders at Zephyr Green Coffee in Downtown New Orleans, which means they drink coffee for a living. And when they do, they do so pretty loudly and obnoxiously.

One of the words that comes up when they explain how to properly sip a cup of coffee is "aspirate." They actually sip coffee from a spoon, not a cup, using very quick, explosive inhalations. This allows the coffee to essentially vaporize and spread all across their palates, so they can taste every bit of it. When a professional coffee sipper sips, it sounds as if a hydraulic connection has come unattached — loud, abrupt and whooshing.

You may not want to mimic their sipping technique if you hope to maintain harmony at your office or home. But it turns out you can learn a lot about coffee if you drop by their office on Julia Street on any given morning around 10. That's when they have their daily cupping sessions, when they sample a half-dozen or so coffees that they've ordered for delivery (called a pre-shipment sample), or they might be checking out new suppliers for possible future orders.

Zephyr is part of the Louis Dreyfus Company, which was founded in 1851 and is now a \$50 billion global corporation based in Amsterdam, providing all sorts of food to all sorts of customers. Zephyr is something of a boutique operation within the organization — it works mostly with specialty coffee, which is different than the commercial-grade coffee widely used by less expensive brands. The organization buys and ships green coffee in burlap sacks, which is then roasted by its customers. Peet's Coffee & Tea is one of Zephyr's largest customers, but the company also works with New Orleans roasters, including Hey! Cafe on Magazine Street, Mojo Coffee Roasters and other small roasters that supply local restaurants like Brennan's. Zephyr's office is fairly small and nondescript — it's marked by an easily overlooked plaque outside the front door, like a British spy agency. Coffee isn't actually stored or transhipped from here — it doesn't particularly smell like a coffee shop. The company has a warehouse a few miles away for local orders, but its chief

warehouses are in Seattle and New Jersey. From here, the company can ship sacks of coffee to customers pretty much anywhere in the country within a few days.

But this office is where most of the coffee gets vetted before it moves to the warehouses. Julia Street is thus a sort of coffee portal, where small sample bags are checked for faults and to ensure that price matches quality.

On the morning that I visited, six different beans were arrayed in shallow, triangle-shaped dishes atop a stainless-steel lab table. I was walked through the process by Drew Cambre, Zephyr's quality control manager. He first ground the samples from each tray one by one. (They were roasted the day before, giving them 24 hours to "outgas and settle down," he said.)

He then arrayed the ground coffee in a handful of Sazerac-style glasses on the table. Then traders came in one by one, bent down and sniffed each glass ("Do not exhale or you're in for a surprise," Cambre warned me when I moved to try the same). When they were done taking notes, each glass got "dosed" with water heated to 200 degrees, and within a couple of minutes a sort of coffee-grind crust formed on top of each. Cambre called for the traders to return, and with a soup spoon they broke the crusts, then stirred from the bottom while simultaneously bending down to inhale. More notes were scribbled on the forms: "tobacco," "cocoa," "toasty." They also scouted for defects, like a moldy smell or "bagging" — when the coffee takes on the smell of the burlap bags it's stored in. Those with minor faults may get diverted into cheaper roasts or flavored coffees.

A few minutes later, after the samples cooled to about 160 degrees, the loud aspirating started. One by one, they took up a spoonful and sipped sharply and audibly. More note-taking ensued. They also examined the trays of beans for consistent size and irregularities. That day's beans were from Honduras, Guatemala, Indonesia and Nicaragua. Some discussion followed the tasting:

Cambre said he tends to prefer the Asian beans, like Indonesian, because they have a richer taste, even when roasted lightly. And a lighter roast means more caffeine. Cambre likes caffeine.

When Cambre looked over the final tallies, he saw that most scored in the 70s or 80s — a typical day. Anything scoring in the 90s would be "ridiculously expensive," he said. "It would have to be specifically ordered, and not something that's going to sit in the warehouse."

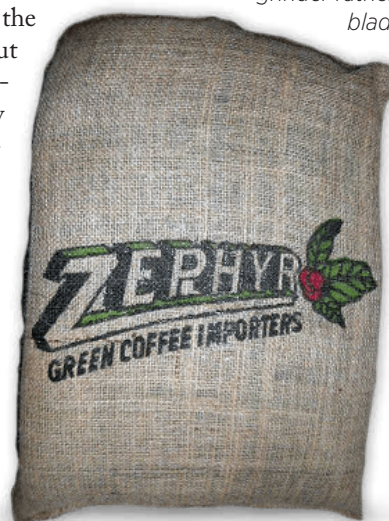
Traders wandered out of the cupping room and went back to sit in front of computer screens, where they do their buying and selling. Cambre recapped by saying that the Honduran coffee was good, but they were already "overbought" on Honduran, so they'd likely pass on it. They were all pretty impressed with the new Guatemalan coffee sample, though — especially at the price the seller was asking. They'd probably order a shipment of that one.

Cambre then set about cleaning up the cupping station, and began to start thinking about tomorrow's tasting. Somewhere, on a farm on the flanks of a Central American volcano, a farmer will soon get good news. ■

➤ Making Coffee

How to make the best possible cup of coffee? Following the exacting protocol of Zephyr's cupping sessions may not fit into your morning routine, but Drew Cambre, Zephyr's quality control manager, has a few suggestions:

- Use whole beans. "As soon as you grind coffee, it starts to oxidize," he said. "It starts losing its flavor and its aroma."
- Spend the \$40 or so on a rudimentary burr grinder rather than the less expensive blade grinder. Blades chip beans into varied sizes, leading to a less consistent product.
- Use a basic pour-over system. You don't need a fancy coffee machine; just get a cone-style system and pour the water gradually.
- Use the right temperature water. About 200 degrees is ideal for extracting the best flavor. Cambre suggests bringing water to a boil, then letting it sit for a few minutes before pouring.



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Easy Smoked Sausage Skillet

Serving Size: 4-6 Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 pkg. Hillshire Farm® Smoked Sausage, diagonally sliced thin | 1 pkg. frozen broccoli, thawed |
| 2 cloves garlic, crushed | ½ cup chicken broth (or water) |
| ¼ cup olive oil | ½ cup tomato sauce |
| 1 large red bell pepper, sliced thin | 2 cups instant rice |
| 1 small yellow onion, sliced thin | ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese |

Instructions:

Heat olive oil and garlic in skillet, stir in smoked sausage slices and cook until browned. Add pepper, onion, broccoli, broth and tomato sauce and simmer for 10 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and the liquid is absorbed. In the meantime, prepare rice according to package instructions. Stir rice into the skillet, sprinkle with cheese and serve.

Visit HillshireFarm.com/recipes for delicious recipes perfect for any night of the week.



THE DAILY GRIND

by Pableaux Johnson

Some mornings, as I sip my first cup of coffee and gaze out the window into the dark, I think about how my mama started most of her days.

I think about how she'd rise an hour or so before the sun came up, grab her two newspapers off the porch and make a pot of coffee. The usually bustling house would be freakishly quiet, and she'd settle into the same spot every morning at the kitchen table and soak up a little bit of sweet, quiet solitude.

It was her time to write in her journal, read her papers without interruption and slowly make sense of the world before the rush of kids, work and everyday chaos kicked in.

Mama's pre-dawn ritual gave her a little precious quiet time — a gift that required little more than a solid alarm clock and a commitment to traditional farmer's hours.

Years later, I'm sitting at my own version of that chair at the kitchen table, soaking up the subdued clatter of my morning refuge — the neighborhood coffee shop.

When I first moved to New Orleans, I found this particular spot —

a window seat on one end of a long room, with extensive views of the shop and the street outside, across from a bus stop. From this seat, I can see the way the shop works from both sides of the bar, and I have spent the past 15 years typing away and looking up between paragraphs, watching café culture unfold in front of me.

My mama picked her seat for a little precious solitude. I picked mine to watch the world go by.

For years, my most productive times have been early mornings — that sliver of time when my mind is clear and my brain is properly caffeinated — especially on deadline days. So, taking a cue from Mama, I arrive at my seat as close to opening time (6 a.m.) as possible.

Early morning work requires an obnoxiously early alarm time (5:35 a.m.), but it brings with it the kind of deep quiet known best by fishermen, duck hunters and older insomniacs. On the drive over, you hear only one set of tires — your own — on the pavement and see deep streetlight shadows.

In my mind, there's a special place in heaven for opening-shift baristas. They arrive well before the sun comes up, brew a flood tide of

life-giving caffeinated elixir, and (if you're consistent and lucky) will slide your medium-sized, medium-roast mug across the counter as you approach the counter. A few seconds of banter (if appropriate), a quick exchange of money, and it's off to work.

From my window seat, I watch the Early Shift regulars wander in, and the process repeats itself maybe a dozen times. The large-animal veterinary surgeon takes his place in his traditional leather lounge chair. The budding medical student gets a jump on studying for the board exams. The pre-workout couple in spandex fitness clothes and fluorescent running shoes ruffle newspaper pages. The off-duty police officer (a cousin of the barista) stops by for a quick chat after clocking out for the night.

As a general rule, Early Shift folks might give each other a subtle nod or a low volume "g'mornin'," but never enough to break the room's library-like calm. The couple might have a whispered conversation about the day's plans or the news of the day, but never enough to cause a ripple in the quiet. And it's a good thing: Quiet allows the first cup of coffee to slowly seep from tongue to bloodstream to brain stem as the sun hits the horizon and the streetlights turn off for the day.

PJ's Coffee of New Orleans was founded in 1978. Today there are more than 65 locations across the region. The first CC's Coffee House opened in 1995 in New Orleans. The company has locations in Mississippi and Louisiana, including more than a dozen in the Baton Rouge area.

After an hour or so, the Commuters place their orders and loiter around the espresso bar. Dressed for the office but bleary around the eyes, the Commuters just want their dry-foam latte to kick in seven minutes before today's all-day staff meeting. ("On second thought, make it a double-shot, will ya?")

As the espresso machine goes through its usual CLUNKclunkWHOOOOSHHdribbble routine, they retrieve the day's first batch of emails, roll their eyes and feverishly start thumb-typing on their smartphones. Once the name is called ("*Cheryl!* Double mocha no-fat latte no foam "*Cheryl!*"), it's time to finish up with "best regards," hit send and hightail it downtown.

The Conversationalists arrive and bring a wave of big-group energy to the room. This group of regulars usually have a set meeting time ("8:45 a.m. sharp every Thursday"); they pull a few table together and proceed to hold good-natured court. Friends stop by and discuss the last Saints game or the Pelicans' impending draft picks. They kill an hour talking about family or politics with the energy of a TV morning show, then head off to work, waving to the baristas with a smile and an energetic farewell.

By this time in the morning, the daily wave of semi-comatose students has come and gone — phones up, eyes glazed, craving sugary beverages — and the members of the Laptop Brigade take up their positions. A bevy of self-employed folks (writers, traveling salesfolk, financial advisors, wedding planners) scout the room for double-wide tables, easy power-outlet access and the magical WiFi password.

On a busy weekday, the long banquette looks like an entrepreneurial wildlife park, as a row of specialists conduct widely varied business pursuits, separated only by coffee mugs and muffin plates. A management consultant Skypes into the home office for a status update, oblivious to the graphic designer's client meeting at the next table. The sales manager cranks away on spreadsheets, isolated by the same industrial-strength, noise-canceling headphones as the computer programmer a few tables down.

Sunny days attract a diverse crowd to the semi-shaded sidewalk tables. The Last Surviving Smokers grab a quick cig/joe combo to kick-start the day, as the Dog Folk try to calm their pooches for a second as they run in for their order. The Stroller Ladies busy themselves in the sunshine with various baby duties (applying sunscreen on pudgy legs, adjusting sunbonnets, doling out Cheerios® from plastic snack boxes).

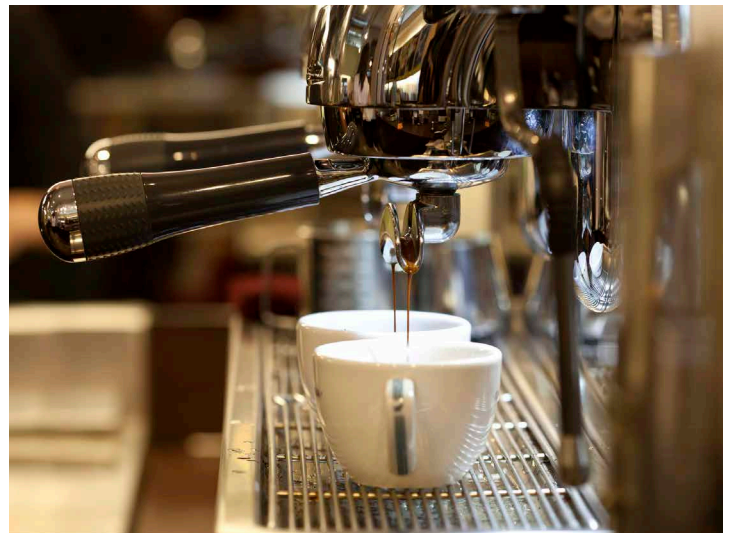
The occasional member of the Laptop Brigade paces the sidewalk on a semi-private business call (after the requisite request of a nearby compatriot: "Watch my stuff for a second?"). They pass the New Wanderers who drag in huge suitcases to a table, so they can write in their journals until their Airbnb opens at noon.

Weekends are a wee bit different, with many of the regulars switching from "office appropriate" attire to "comfort forward"

togs — pencil skirts are replaced by yoga pants, T-shirts and shorts pinch-hit for suits and ties. On Sunday mornings, thick newspapers replace the phones for leisurely reading, and couples work through the tough crosswords with no real sense of urgency. Just a perfect place to relax and enjoy the sun on the sidewalk.

By late morning, I'm usually hyper-caffeinated, about done with my desk work and ready to move on for the day. I pack up my laptop and say my goodbyes to the remaining regulars. I bus my table, wave to the busy baristas (now ramping up for the lunch rush) and hit the pavement — happy, energized and with a whole day ahead of me.

As I leave my little window seat, I think about the power of that place and the morning rituals that can start you off on the right foot. My mama needed her silence and I need my clatter, and it's reassuring that tomorrow morning — well before sunrise — I'll be back to start another day. ■





COFFEE & SYMPATHY

by Crescent Dragonwagon + photo by Romney Caruso

There's a scene in my friend Mara Novak's unpublished first novel (I have the privilege of being one of her early readers). Something devastating has just happened to Ellen, the female protagonist. In the wake of this unlooked-for tragedy, she finds her way to the kitchen of Ginny, her best friend.

"Ginny's kitchen is like a warm cave, a secret den. The dark beams make the low ceiling feel even lower, and the walls are covered with baskets and bunches of herbs and pictures of chickens. The kettle is just coming to a boil when Ellen steps into the steamy banana-scented air. Ginny hugs her, while the kettle works itself up to a scream, and they both ignore it."

"How are you doing?" Ginny asks as she pours (the) water...

"Ellen has given several answers to this question over the past week:

'We're hanging in there,' and 'We're taking it one day at a time.'

"But to Ginny she says, 'I can't remember anything I've done this week. I don't think I've eaten.'"

"You don't remember, or you really haven't eaten?"

"I haven't been hungry."

"You're going to eat this." Ginny slices off a slab ... (of banana coffee cake...)"

How is Ginny so sure? What makes the offer of something sweet, warm, homemade, served in a kitchen still fragrant from baking, so deeply comforting? Why is its "there, there, it'll be okay" nature enhanced when served with hot, dark, strong coffee?

First, let's consider a more basic question. What makes a particular cake a "coffee" cake?

First off, confusingly, it's not a cake that includes coffee in its batter. Rather, it's a cake specifically intended to be served *with* coffee. In its batter are the commonplace ingredients of most cakes: butter, sugar, flour, eggs, milk (or another liquid), leavening, vanilla and/or other flavorings. And coffee cakes as made in this country almost always include cinnamon.

A perfect American-style coffee cake combines these ingredients in proportions that yield a single-layer cake, exceptionally moist and tender, sweet but not crazy-sweet, decidedly buttery. It's quickly mixed,

leavened with baking powder and/or soda (we leave the yeast-risen varieties to the Europeans, who evidently have more time on their hands than we do, or at least are better at planning ahead).

And, American coffee cake is not frosted. The lack of frosting (okay, sometimes there's a little decorative squiggle of white icing, but not generally) is, I think, supposed to fool you into thinking it is less "cake" than it actually is, so therefore you can eat it with impunity as a mid-morning or afternoon snack, or at breakfast, as you would not, say, a layer cake covered with chocolate frosting. (I would advise not being fooled; coffee cake is definitely cake and, alas, there is no such thing, nutritionally and calorically speaking, as eating cake with impunity. Sometimes, however, I think there is a psychological immunity, as when Ginny serves her friend Ellen, in Mara's still-untitled novel.)

In lieu of frosting, coffee cakes are usually sprinkled with streusel, a baked-on crumbly topping. The streusel, besides giving the characteristic crunch, is inviting and interesting, but not all that showy. However,

it's iconic. That streusel conveys "coffee cake" as clearly as the crisscrossed, pressed tines of a fork on a light-brown, flattened disc signal "peanut butter cookie."

From these basics on, it's just theme and variation. Sometimes a portion of the streusel is layered into the batter. Sometimes it's speckled with walnuts or almonds or chocolate. Sometimes fruit — fresh or dried, chopped if large — is included; sometimes the fruit appears as a swirl of jam. The one served by Ginny in my friend Mara's novel goes whole hog: It's *"full of walnuts and chopped apricots and chocolate chips and crystallized ginger."*

So there you have it: Coffee cakes are simple-to-make confections, to which you can give any number of signature twists, and which even, conveniently, come out of the oven with topping already in place. Speaking of which, though they're divine straight out of the oven and a little warm, they don't suffer by being made a day in advance and then reheated briefly. Double the recipe, and serve one at a large holiday brunch. Or, take one to a potluck — not only will it vanish in a flash, but it travels well, in the pan it was baked in, so there won't be any slide-around layers or icing that drips in a hot car.

I can also tell you, from experience, that such cakes are the perfect addition to a country inn breakfast. I know because, once upon a time, I owned a country inn, Dairy Hollow House, with my late husband, Ned Shank, in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, a Victorian-era Ozark Mountain resort town. We made breakfasts (full breakfasts, delivered to each room daily, in gigantic split-oak baskets) for 18 years, and our guests adored them. The blueberry coffee cake recipe I'm about to offer you was one we got asked for so often I finally made copies of it to give to guests.

Blueberries grow beautifully in the Ozarks; they grow with vigor and are not afflicted by pests, so at least at that time, *all* blueberries were organic. Of course we wanted to use

them; it was "regionally right" to do so, and damn, those blueberries were delicious. (I must say, and I hope I'm not showing off, that Dairy Hollow House, 1982-1998, was "farm to table" way before "farm to table" was cool.) Often, when we could sneak a day off, we would go to a pick-your-own place called Blueberry Hill, as in the place where Fats Domino found his thrill. Was our coffee cake extra good because it was redolent with the atmosphere of picking, under the sun, bees buzzing, the plunk of berries dropped into a container, the finding spray after spray of that dark blue fruit misted with white, the berries popped into our mouths, the having slipped off from work in those cell-phone-free days — was this a, or the, secret ingredient?

Maybe yes, maybe no. For sure, ours was more tender than most, because we used an acidic liquid (sour cream and yogurt) rather than sweet milk, leavening it with baking soda, not just powder. And because it was more tender, the streusel contrasted all the more delightfully with the cake.

I mentioned psychological immunity earlier. That there are times when considerations of calories and sugar content must be put aside. When comfort and conversation are required, coffee cake and coffee with a friend are mysteriously, powerfully conducive to sympathy and the sharing of burdens and perplexity. The coffee is energizing, the cake is comforting. The intangible — friendship and succor, life going on — is made tangible.

"I'm starving suddenly," Ellen says, in Mara's novel. "Maybe I just needed to get away." Ellen is through the first slice and halfway into another, just as large, before she pauses for breath. Ginny sets a mug ... in front of her and Ellen's throat closes hard and she is wheezing and howling and her tears are splashing onto her plate."

Salty tears, bitter coffee and a shared slice of rich, warm blueberry-studded cake to sweeten them. Now, isn't everything better?

■

Blueberry Coffee Cake

You can use all sour cream or all Greek yogurt; I find a combination of the two is perfect.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Oil or butter for greasing pan

FOR STREUSEL

- ¼ cup butter, cut in small pieces
- ¼ cup unbleached white flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ⅔ cup light brown sugar
- ⅔ cup chopped walnuts or pecans

FOR CAKE

Dry ingredients

- 1¼ cups sifted whole wheat pastry flour, measured after sifting
- 1 cup sifted unbleached white flour, measured after sifting
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

Wet ingredients

- ¾ cup butter, slightly softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ¾ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1¼ cups fresh blueberries

HOW TO PREP

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Oil or butter a 9" x 13" rectangular pan.

MAKE STREUSEL: Combine all ingredients except nuts, tossing lightly with fingers, until crumbly. Toss in nuts. Set aside as you make the cake batter.

MAKE CAKE BATTER: Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl, stirring well with a fork. Set aside.

Beat butter and sugar, using a handheld or stand mixer, until well-mixed, creamy and a little fluffy, about 5 or 6 minutes. Add vanilla and, one at a time, the eggs. Continue beating another minute after each egg is added. Remove beaters and work with a wooden spoon from here on out.

Add the flour mixture to the creamed butter-sugar-egg mixture, alternating with the sour cream and/or Greek yogurt, folding in gently but thoroughly with the wooden spoon.

Transfer half the batter to the prepared baking dish (layer will be somewhat thin). Sprinkle with all the blueberries and half the streusel. Dollop the remaining batter over the blueberries as best you can, then sprinkle remaining streusel over all.

Bake for 40 minutes, and let cool for 10 to 20 minutes, if you can bear to wait that long. Serve with, of course, hot coffee!

Makes one 9" x 13" coffee cake, serving 12.

“What makes the offer of something sweet, warm, homemade, served in a kitchen still fragrant from baking, so deeply comforting? Why is its ‘there, there, it’ll be okay’ nature enhanced when served with hot, dark, strong coffee?”



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Cooking with
COFFEE

by Judy Walker + photo by Romney Caruso

As long as there's been coffee in the kitchens of this country, innovative cooks have been adding the little bit left in the pot to their culinary creations. After that slice of country ham was fried for breakfast, Grandma would add a splash of coffee to the fat left in the cast-iron skillet. A few stirs and a pat of butter later, red-eye gravy was ready to ladle over grits.

Today, more than ever, coffee is being eaten in many savory as well as sweet ways. Its deep, unexpected richness is especially good with dark cuts of beef, lamb and poultry.

As home coffee technology has changed — from percolators to Mr. Coffees to countertop espresso machines to Keurigs — so have the ways to cook with coffee.

My great-aunt Marie Hodges (known as “Jim’s Marie” to distinguish her from the other Marie Hodges in the family) was known for her pot roast made with coffee as the braising liquid. One friend adds it to her beef stew and, like Aunt Marie, to the pot roast she cooks for the family in the slow cooker. She thinks of cooking with coffee, she says, “as the same as using Coke or Dr Pepper, like Mama used to use.”

Slow cooker pot roasts made with coffee, by the way, yield terrific gravy, thickened with cornstarch and served over mashed potatoes or mashed cauliflower.

Today’s cooks are likely to rub ground coffee on a thick cut of beef, as in the Coffee-Crusted Beef Tenderloin recipe, which combines coffee with dark brown sugar, cumin and cayenne pepper. Chefs mix coffee with a sweet syrup, such as maple syrup, cane syrup or honey, to make a glaze for poultry or salmon. Commander’s Palace Executive Chef Tory McPhail uses chicory coffee combined with various sweet elements — cane syrup, bourbon, even muscadine jelly — to lacquer on poultry, one of his signature dishes. And coffee is terrific as a flavoring for barbecue sauce for beef or pork.

You see a theme here? Coffee pairs well with other earthy ingredients: mushrooms and caramelized onions; balsamic and red wine vinegars; black and red beans; garlic, cumin, thyme, red pepper flakes and chiles, including chipotle. As barbecue sauce proves, coffee is good with tomatoes and catsup too.

On the sweeter side, coffee complements not just chocolate but brown sugar, coconut, almonds and any other nut. Naturally, it plays well with any creamy, sweet flavor. Drink and dessert “mocha” is just sweetened cocoa or chocolate and coffee.

Perhaps coffee’s expanding popularity, to drink and to use for cooking, is due to the fact that Americans are now more appreciative of bitter flavors, as other cultures have been for a long time. South Louisiana has long had an affinity for coffee with chicory, the bitter root originally used by the French as an extender for coffee.

Café du Monde is one of the top two or three brands used to make

Vietnamese coffee, strong and sugared with sweetened condensed milk. This is not surprising: Vietnam food culture was also heavily influenced by the French.

Coffee can be added to recipes in its liquid form, but also as a pinch of instant espresso, a half cup of cold brewed concentrate, or a teaspoon of instant chicory coffee or espresso. The instant coffees last a long time and are handy to keep in the pantry.

We on the Gulf Coast are lucky to have a couple of brands of commercial coffee concentrates readily available for cooking as well as drinking. One of my longtime favorite desserts is café au lait ice cream made with chicory coffee concentrate — and there’s no need for an ice cream freezer. (If you’ve never made it, you’ll be amazed how simple it is to create ice cream without a churn and rock salt.) If you don’t have coffee concentrate, make it from instant. Dissolve four teaspoons of instant chicory coffee or instant espresso in one-half cup of hot water, and let cool to room temperature before use.

Coffee concentrate is perfect for coffee cocktails — even coffee shots. And, of course, it’s perfect for iced coffee and other coffee drinks. One big advantage of making these at home, with concentrate or by other means, is the huge cost savings over coffee bars. When it’s too hot and humid in the summertime to drink hot coffee, I make skinny iced coffee with skim milk, coffee concentrate, Splenda and a half-teaspoon or so of sugar-free hazelnut syrup.

Besides drinking it hot in a mug or iced in a glass, coffee can be used in other morning beverages. A friend who has maintained a huge weight loss for years specializes in easy high-protein meals, including the occasional breakfast smoothie made from coffee, a banana and an envelope of Carnation Instant Breakfast. Adapt this idea using your favorite protein powder that’s made for mixing with milk.

Try a pinch of finely ground coffee in a spice rub for beef, duck, chicken thighs and other dark meats. Adventurous outdoor cooks — every guy or gal around here who owns a grill — can begin with a base of a half-cup of finely ground coffee, a third-cup of coarsely ground pepper and three tablespoons of kosher salt. Add other favorite spices to suit your taste.

To experiment with liquid coffee in recipes, substitute the cooled stuff for the same amount of liquid in your favorite from-scratch recipe, or even in a mix. For instance, Anne Byrn, the Cake Mix Doctor, suggests using one-quarter cup of brewed and cooled coffee to replace the same amount of water in angel food cake mix. Or make mocha brownies by substituting all or some of the water in brownie mix with coffee.

One question that comes up occasionally when cooking with caffeinated beverages like coffee and cola is: Does it cook out? No. In fact, it may become more concentrated as the dish heats. This is something to know in case you are serving a dish to children or

“Coffee pairs well with other earthy ingredients: mushrooms and caramelized onions; balsamic and red wine vinegars; black and red beans; garlic, cumin, thyme, red pepper flakes and chiles, including chipotle. As barbecue sauce proves, coffee is good with tomatoes and catsup too.”

anyone else who might be sensitive to caffeine.

You can always do a little math. If you're adding one cup of coffee to a batch of brownies that makes 16 servings, it equals a half-ounce, or one tablespoon, per brownie. If you use a quarter cup of coffee in the same batch — still enough to flavor it — it would be less than one teaspoon per serving. It's the cook's call. As always, it's best to inform guests, or make a coffee-free version of your coffee baked beans for the kids.

Coffee has always been served with dessert and sweets, and now it's used in more and more dessert recipes, too. Coffee cuts the sweetness in baked goods, and it deepens the flavor of chocolate.

Some classic desserts include coffee, such as French Gateau L'Opera. The French assemble the thinnest possible layers of coffee-soaked sponge cake, ganache, buttercream and chocolate glaze into the gateau. Classic Italian tiramisu is easier for the home cook to tackle. While a custard mixed with mascarpone chills, ladyfingers are split and soaked in a mixture of coffee and rum, brandy or coffee-flavored liqueur such as Kahlua, then assembled with the custard and whipped cream.

Affogato is another Italian concept, gelato "drowned" in espresso. It's perfect for casual entertaining. Divide a pint of vanilla, chocolate, mocha or coffee ice cream or gelato into four serving bowls, and drizzle with a cup of espresso. Serve immediately, maybe with a crisp cookie. To make it for one, use two scoops of gelato and one shot of espresso.

Ina Garten makes a coffee-flavored chocolate cake with a little coffee in the buttercream for the frosting. You can also make coffee shortbread bars, or biscotti, with a little finely ground espresso.

If a recipe calls for ground coffee, it should specify which grind. If it doesn't, plan on using the finest, powdery grinds for something like cookies or buttercream, so the grounds aren't obvious. Coarser grinds are good for rubs.

One final note: Since hot coffee left to sit can become bitter, taste that little bit left in the pot first. If it tastes okay, pour it into a jar and refrigerate. Tomorrow, try it in a recipe.

You could start with red-eye gravy. ■



➤ **IN THE GARDEN: Sacred Grounds**

Adding organic matter like leftover coffee grounds to your soil will improve its structure. Coffee grounds release nitrogen into the soil as they decay, providing mineral nutrients like magnesium and potassium, which are essential for healthy plants. Mix them into your compost, work them into the soil around your plants, or scatter them over mulch, flowerbeds or shrubs. Rouses Produce Director Patrick Morris says coffee grounds are an old farmer's trick for building up fields. "They help improve the soil tilth, balance the pH, and give it some substance." Morris likes the idea of adding coffee grounds to compost. "Coffee grounds are a green composting material. They're made of beans, which are an organic material and completely biodegradable, and reusing them instead of adding them to a landfill is sustainable gardening." Container gardeners can add coffee grounds directly to the dirt in their vegetable pots. Rouses Local Produce Buyer Larry Daigle says they work especially well with green onions (scallions), which he grows old-school style in a pot by his back door. Daigle's approach makes perfect sense, says Morris. "The grounds aren't compact, like clay dirt, so they allow a lot of aeration in the soil, and they add nitrogen, which is great for scallions." —Marcy, Rouses Creative Director

Coffee-Crusted Beef Tenderloin

Serves 8 — Pictured on page 22.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 (3-pound) beef tenderloin
 - 3 tablespoons finely ground coffee
 - 3 tablespoons dark brown sugar, lightly packed
 - 3 teaspoons kosher salt
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 - 5 carrots, peeled, halved and sliced lengthwise
 - 1½ pounds small red potatoes, halved
 - 2 small white onions, quartered
 - 2 teaspoons dried rosemary, crumbled
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 4 tablespoons butter
 - 1 cup red wine
 - 2 cups beef stock
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

HOW TO PREP

On a sheet of parchment, tie the tenderloin with cooking twine, knotting securely at 1-inch intervals. Trim ends of twine. In a small bowl, combine coffee, brown sugar, 2 teaspoons salt, cumin and cayenne. Rub the mixture all over the tenderloin. Put it on a rack and let sit for 1 hour to come to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Put the carrots, potatoes and onion in the bottom of a roasting pan. Add 1 teaspoon salt, rosemary and olive oil. Toss to coat the vegetables.

Put the tenderloin on top of the vegetables. Roast for 2½ to 3 hours, checking after the first 2 hours, until interior of the tenderloin is 130 degrees. Remove vegetables from the pan and place in a bowl. Pierce with a fork to check for tenderness. If not tender enough, microwave vegetables at 3-minute intervals until they reach desired tenderness. Keep covered and warm.

Heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a cast-iron skillet. When the butter is hot, transfer tenderloin to the skillet and brown until very dark on all sides, adding another 2 tablespoons of butter as needed. Put the tenderloin on a cutting board and cover with foil.

Make jus. Put the roasting pan over a burner (or two) on the stove and heat over medium heat. Add wine. With a wooden spoon, scrape up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan until they dissolve in the wine. Cook until reduced by about half, about 5 minutes. Stir in beef stock and cook until reduced again by about half, another 8 minutes or so, stirring occasionally. Taste and add salt and freshly ground black pepper to season as needed. Pour through a strainer or sieve into a serving bowl.

Snip the twine off the tenderloin with cooking shears, using tongs to remove the twine completely. Slice tenderloin into 1-inch-thick servings. Serve with the jus and vegetables.

Grilled (or Baked) Chicken Drumsticks with Coffee Barbecue Sauce

Serves 4

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 3 pounds chicken drumsticks, thighs or wings
- Creole seasoning
- ½ cup catsup
- ⅓ cup brewed coffee
- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

HOW TO PREP

Sprinkle chicken with Creole seasoning. Let sit while heating a grill to medium or preheating an oven to 375 degrees.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine catsup, coffee, brown sugar, vinegar, garlic, salt and red pepper flakes. Stir occasionally until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes.

TO GRILL: Put the chicken on the grill and cook, turning occasionally, for 20 to 25 minutes for drumsticks or thighs, or 10 to 15 minutes for wings. Brush with sauce and grill until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center, not touching bone, reads 165 degrees, then cook another 5 to 10 minutes for wings and longer for bigger pieces. The sauce will begin to caramelize on the chicken. Watch carefully so it doesn't burn. Brush again with the sauce just before taking off the grill.

TO BAKE: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a large baking or roasting pan with foil and coat with nonstick cooking spray. Sprinkle chicken with Creole seasoning and put it on the pan in a single layer.

Prepare barbecue sauce as directed. Bake chicken for 30 minutes, turning once. Remove from oven. Brush the sauce all over the chicken, coating well. Return the pan to the oven and bake 10 minutes more for wings and 20 minutes more for bigger pieces. Glaze once more with remaining sauce and heat 5 to 10 minutes longer. (Check drumsticks, wings and thighs for doneness by cutting into a piece.) Serve hot, cold or at room temperature.



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Grilled Chicken on Wild Rice

- 6 oz John Soules Foods Grilled Chicken Breast Strips, thawed
- 6 oz Wild Rice, cooked
- 6 oz Green Beans, blanched

Preheat an oven to 375°F. Cook your favorite wild rice dish according to the instructions. Place the John Soules Foods Grilled Chicken Breast Strips on a cookie sheet and loosely cover with foil. Place in the oven for 7 to 10 minutes.

In a medium sauté pan heat 1 tablespoon butter and sauté the green beans for 4 to 5 minutes, or until heated through.

Place the rice on a serving plate, top with Grilled chicken and arrange the green beans along side. Serve.

Cajun Made Kettle Cooked

Cajun crunch that packs all the flavor of Louisiana!





The Old Coffee Pot **RESTAURANT**

by Tom Fitzmorris + photo by Eugenia Uhl

The first restaurant review I ever wrote for radio hit the airwaves in 1975. Out of all the restaurants I could have covered, I chose Maxcy's Coffee Pot. In a lot of ways, this place was the epitome of the mainstream New Orleans eatery. It wasn't ancient like Antoine's or brilliant like LeRuth's or funky Creole like Buster Holmes. It was, however, in the French Quarter, it served unalloyed New Orleans food, and it had a staff of cooks and waiters who were entertaining characters.

I was introduced to The Coffee Pot by a fellow UNO student who didn't have a car. I did — a 1972 VW Bus, which was big enough

to carry my growing group of friends. I was already writing about restaurants, and the whole bunch of us went out to eat to the very limits of our budgets. The Coffee Pot almost immediately became our favorite place to dine, and we were recognized both by the waitresses and the management as regulars.

The Coffee Pot dates back to 1894. Its original location was around the corner on Royal Street, just uptown from St. Peter Street. Or so I heard. Other sources told me that it either had never moved, or that it moved to a different place. Nobody seems to know for sure.

What does seem to be true about the early days of The Coffee Pot is that Leah Chase — now the famous chef and owner of Dooky Chase — took her first job in the restaurant business there. She was a country girl then. In her 90s now, she either learned something at The Coffee Pot, or it learned from her.

In its first 20 years, The Coffee Pot was a place where people who lived and worked in the French Quarter went for breakfast and lunch. Its location being what it is, it surely benefited from the growing tourism industry in New Orleans after World War II. What people most liked about New Orleans then was its European quality. But The Coffee Pot stuck with what it had always cooked — red beans, gumbo, fried and grilled chicken, and daily specials with an unmistakable home-style quality dominated the menu.

The Coffee Pot's best-known act of culinary preservation was a dessert/breakfast item called calas. Pronounced cah-lah whether singular or plural, these were spheres of rice, rice flour, cinnamon, brown sugar and suchlike ingredients, caused to rise by baking powder, and fried in hot oil. They occupied the same part of the culinary landscape that beignets did. Calas were served from stationary carts in most of the markets around town and were very popular during the first half of the 1900s. One of my older aunts had "calas" as her nickname.

Although rice cakes, for the most part, didn't make the jump into the modern era, calas are still on the menu at The Coffee Pot. This venerable old joint appears to have kept the dish alive single-handedly.

In the 1970s, my dining companions from UNO drifted away. But we all continued to run into one another at The Coffee Pot, where we remained regulars. By this time, I was being absorbed into a new group of freelance writers, artists, photographers and general bohemians. We worked for the weekly newspapers *Vieux Carré Courier*, *Figaro* and *New Orleans Magazine*.

In 1974 I became editor of *New Orleans Magazine*. The site for

editorial meetings was often The Coffee Pot. It was the perfect place, within walking distance of the magazine headquarters. And almost all the freelancers lived in the French Quarter. In fact, so did a lot of the people we were writing about. The number of magazine stories that started with something overheard at The Coffee Pot over red beans and sausage was *much* greater than was statistically likely.

It was around this time that The Coffee Pot underwent renovations. Its St. Peter Street building was originally a modest, two-story townhouse. The first-floor parlor became The Coffee Pot's main dining room, with about 40 seats. Regulars jockeyed for the two window tables, from which there wasn't much to see. Trucks often blocked the view. The A&P grocery store (now Rouses Market) had a delivery door that sometimes became interesting. I once saw the receiving gate suddenly burst open, releasing an avalanche of groceries onto the sidewalk and street. A guy from inside surfed across the moving pile, trying to fall away from the rolling cases of canned vegetables.

The key person in the dining room was Pearl Jefferson, a lady who not only waited tables but also baked a lot of the desserts. She retired in 2013 after holding down her shift at The Coffee Pot for 54 years. Everybody wanted to be waited on by Pearl. Another entertaining server was Alton, who never seemed to stop talking about how good his customers looked. He kept us up to date on who had visited the restaurant lately. Everything he said was hilarious.

Jim Maxcy was the owner then. He was something of a martinet, dictating commands to the staff constantly. He was in the real estate business as well as the restaurant business, and he seemed to always be hatching new promotions that tied in with the restaurant.

One of these was The Coffee Pot's house salad dressing, known there as "buttermilk dressing." It was a white, thick but runny sauce that was so good that Maxcy was constantly being asked for the recipe. He would then reach behind him and pull out a few envelopes of Hidden Valley Ranch salad dressing mix. "Just mix this with buttermilk and you've got it," he'd say. The way the label was arranged, with "Ranch" as the biggest word on it, made "Ranch" appear to be a flavor. Thus was born "Ranch" as a variety of dressing in the 1960s. The Coffee Pot sold the daylight out of the stuff. Hidden Valley Ranch, in case you didn't know, was the original ranch dressing. "Ranch" is now the most popular salad dressing in America.

In the late 1970s, Maxcy and two business partners created a magnificent new restaurant on Rampart Street. Armstrong Park was in its early stages, and it looked as if that would be a new frontier for extending the French Quarter. The new restaurant was called Jonathan, named for the same person whose name was also on The Coffee Pot's fanciest egg dish. (It still is.)

Restaurant Jonathan was an Art Deco masterpiece. Its chef was Tom Cowman, a brilliant man with a style all his own. (He would later turn up at the Upperline restaurant.) But even with all that going for it, Jonathan was a failure. French Quarter development headed to the riverfront, not Rampart Street. I never saw Maxcy again after that.

The Coffee Pot kept going, changing hands a few times. One of the owners built a larger dining room on the second floor and expanded the narrow courtyard. The courtyard tables became the most popular in the restaurant, except on days of scorching heat or rain — and not always on even those days.

Another change came: On the sign above the entrance the name of the restaurant became "The Old Coffee Pot," in smaller letters than before. This made room on the sign for a great big "GUMBO." I suspect that the reason for this was to capture the attention of people headed to the nearby Gumbo Shop, which has always had a lot in common with The Old Coffee Pot.

The current owner of The Old Coffee Pot is Dustin Palmisano, a former waiter who took over four years ago. He makes it clear that The Old Coffee Pot will continue to do what it always has done: serve delicious, home-style Creole food, with calas remaining not only on the menu but one of the most popular dishes in the place, whether eaten for breakfast or dessert. (It works either way.)

All the above leaves one more matter, one whose absence in this article so far may seem odd. How was the coffee at The Old Coffee Pot? It was clearly nothing like what you find in the coffeehouses everywhere in America. Nor is it anything like the French Market-style café au lait-and-beignet emporiums so distinctive to New Orleans. All the owners from Maxcy on down have said that the customers — both local people and tourists — love The Old Coffee Pot's coffee. I don't believe it. In that first radio restaurant review I wrote of the restaurant in 1975, I finished with these words: "The coffee is terrible." I think this remains true, at least according to my palate. The coffee at The Coffee Pot (new or old) still leaves me cold.

Other than that, I love the place.

Poppy Tooker's Calas

Makes 1 dozen

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2 cups cooked rice
- 6 tablespoons flour
- 3 heaping tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 5-6 cups vegetable oil for frying
- Powdered sugar for topping

HOW TO PREP

Heat oil in large heavy pot to 360 degrees.

Mix the rice with flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Sprinkle with the vanilla and mix well.

Add eggs to these ingredients and stir. When the eggs are thoroughly mixed in use a tablespoon to drop batter into the hot oil. Fry until browned on both sides.

Drain on paper towel and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve hot.

➤ **Louisiana Eats!**

Poppy Tooker is a culinary activist, food writer and host of the weekly radio show Louisiana Eats!, which airs in Baton Rouge, Lafayette and New Orleans. Rouses is a proud sponsor. Tooker has been instrumental in reviving endangered local foods such as rice calas.



Café Sua Da

by Marcy, Rouses Creative Director

How a Louisiana version of coffee and chicory made its way onto Vietnamese menus all over the world is a great example of how immigrants absorb — and influence — local food and customs.

Louisiana was first claimed by France in 1682, and though the French drank coffee their American counterparts preferred tea. That was true until the early 1770s, when the British levied outrageous taxes on tea imports and Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty threw 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. Drinking coffee suddenly became a patriotic duty.

By 1860 Louisiana belonged to the United States. New Orleans was one of its largest cities and took the title of the nation's second-largest importer of coffee in the country. Coffee had become a large part of the city's culture but a Union naval blockade in the American Civil War cut off the port of New Orleans and the area's coffee supply quickly ran short.

The French were familiar with coffee shortages, having endured their own during Napoleon's Continental Blockade, and quickly passed along the use of chicory — a plant native to France — in coffee to New Orleans.

A New Home on the Gulf Coast

More than 130,000 South Vietnamese refugees arrived in America in 1975 after the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. About 15 percent — 20,000 people — found a new home on the Gulf Coast, many with help from Catholic Charities and area churches. Many Vietnamese families made their way to fishing communities like Bayou La Batre, Alabama, Empire and Grand Isle, Louisiana, and suburban areas of New Orleans, including Gretna and Avondale on the West Bank and New Orleans East. They quickly became entrenched in their new communities.

Coffee was first introduced to Vietnam by French colonists in the 1880s. Today Vietnam is the world's largest grower and exporter of robusta coffee beans. Vietnamese robusta coffee is dark and intense, with a bitter edge due to its higher caffeine content.

Chicory coffee has a similar flavor profile, and brands like Café Du Monde, which is a mixture of chicory, robusta and sweeter Arabica beans, offered the new immigrants a taste of home. Because sourcing authentic Vietnamese coffee was so difficult, chicory coffee quickly became the go-to replacement, then the coffee of choice. Today Vietnamese restaurants in America and all over the world get their ground coffee from local companies like Café Du Monde.

Deliciously Sweet

Vietnamese coffee is drunk cold or hot and sweetened with condensed milk — a practice that dates back to the French colonists. Because milk was scarce at the time, the colonists sweetened their robusta coffee with the more readily available canned condensed milk.

At Tan Dinh in Gretna, one of the New Orleans West Bank's most popular Vietnamese restaurants, owner Ngat “Maria” Vu uses a mixture of Café Du Monde and Trung Nguyen, a Vietnamese robusta grind. She prepares our coffee tableside. The grinds are filtered slowly through a single-serve, stainless-steel Vietnamese coffee filter into a cup containing condensed milk. This slow press process, which is similar to that of a French press, extracts sugar from the chicory and flavor from the coffee.

The brew is stirred gently, then poured over ice while still hot for a classic *café sua da*, or “coffee, milk, ice.”

This ritual is repeated at Dong Phuong in New Orleans East, where a meal of cha gio (egg rolls) and grilled pork Bánh Mì (a Vietnamese po-boy) is followed by hot or cold French-dripped chicory coffee sweetened with condensed milk. The *ca phe sua* is equally popular at Pho Tau Bay, a favorite of chefs Emeril Lagasse and John Besh. The Takacs, owners of the popular venue, recently relocated their restaurant from the Westbank Expressway in Gretna to Tulane Avenue in New Orleans.

There are exceptions to every rule, of course, and one is Dang's in Baton Rouge, which is located in the Florida Boulevard strip mall anchored by Vinh Phat Oriental Market. There's no better cure for the rainy day blues



— or just a case of the Mondays — than a steaming bowl of pho, and the pho at Dang's is some of the best in Baton Rouge. It's complex and doesn't need much hoisin sauce to bring out its rich flavor. Dang's uses a dark-roasted Vietnamese brand of coffee rather than the more typical Louisiana coffee and chicory. But like all Vietnamese blends, their hot and iced coffees are deliciously sweet from the condensed milk.

In its long and storied culinary history, the Gulf Coast has been blessed with offerings from a variety of cultures. It's really not surprising that some — like the Vietnamese and New Orleans coffee styles — have overlapped to create even more tempting delights for our palates, and palates around the world. ■



➤ Coffee and Chicory

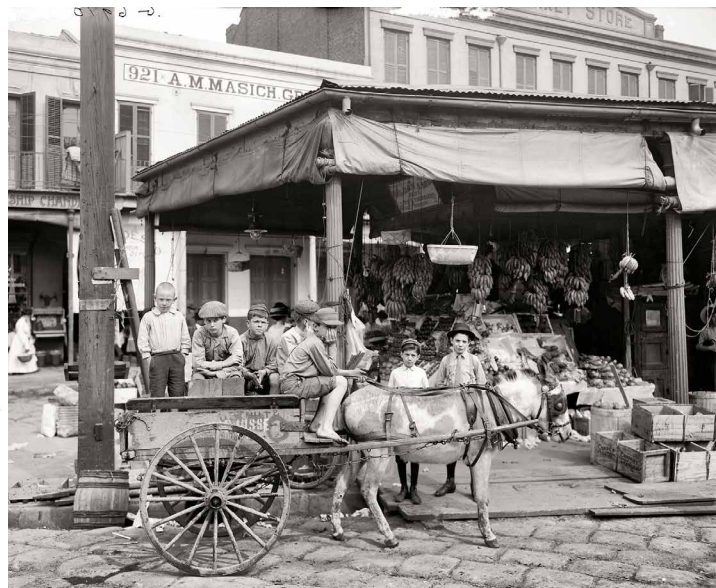
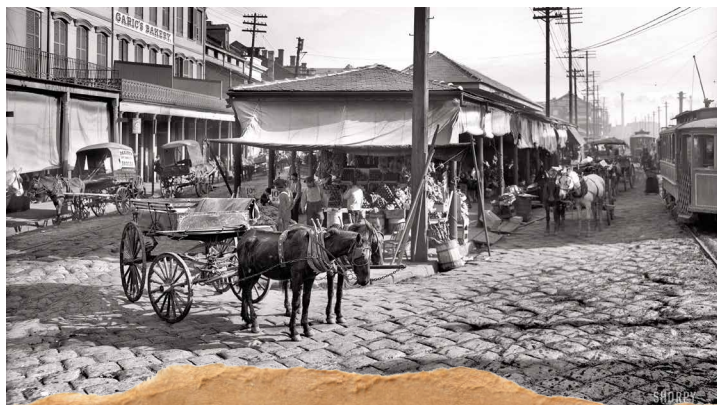
Most coffee and chicory brands originated in New Orleans, including Café Du Monde. One of the city's major coffee purveyors, William B. Reily, got his start with a wholesale grocery business in Monroe, Louisiana. Reily moved to New Orleans in 1902, where he founded the Luzianne brand. Reily Foods owns Luzianne, CDM, French Market and Union, which are all produced in New Orleans. Folger's Coffee, a national brand, is also produced in New Orleans, as well as PJ's brands and local micro-roast French Truck.

New Orleans born coffee chain PJ's opened locations in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in 2016.

> **Morning Call**

Café Du Monde is the oldest tenant of the French Market, dating back to 1862. But they were not the only coffee shop in the neighborhood. The Morning Call Coffee Stand first opened in the 1870s, behind the “red stores” buildings in the French Market. Morning Call replaced the Vegetable Market in the 1930s. In its location at Ursulines and Decatur, Morning Call offered curbside service; carhops would take your order so you didn't have to leave the car. Morning Call was a fixture of the “back of the market” until the business moved to Metairie in 1974, just behind Lakeside Mall. The interior of the Metairie location features the original fixtures from the French Market stand. In the 1990s, Café Du Monde opened a stand inside Lakeside Mall itself, so once again, the two coffee stands are just a few blocks walk from each other.

—Edward Branley, GoNOLA.com



ROSE NICAUD

by Liz Williams, Director of the Southern Food & Beverage Museum

Street vending was alive and well in New Orleans in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Not everyone had access to a kitchen, nor were shops always open, so selling food on the street was not only popular — it was necessary. It also presented an opportunity for people of color, both slaves and free persons, to earn money. One of the most resourceful and creative of these *vendeuses* was Rose Nicaud.

Rose Nicaud is considered to be the inventor of the coffee stand in New Orleans. She would have roasted, blended and ground her own coffee, perhaps adding chicory. She was known to sell her delicious coffee — both *noir* and *au lait* — in front of the St. Louis Cathedral, so that those who had fasted before attending Mass would be able to fortify themselves immediately after the service. Although in the beginning people stood near the stand to drink their coffee, Rose was later able to have a stand with seating at the French Market. She inspired others to create stands for selling coffee, as well as foods such as pralines and calas. ■

▲ Vintage photos — New Orleans, French Market



Hot Coffee, Mississippi

Hot Coffee, Mississippi, took its name from the town's most popular beverage. In the late 1800s, travelers between Natchez, Mississippi, and Mobile, Alabama, were greeted at the midway point by a sign for L.N. Davis's store advertising "the best hot coffee around." Davis' secret, other than the pure spring water and beans from New Orleans, was the molasses drippings added for sweetness and flavor. His hot coffee was so popular with horse-and-buggy travelers that Davis' inn, the town and a 12-mile stretch of road all eventually adopted the name. Today in Hot Coffee the best hot coffee around is at McDonald's Store.

➤ *McDonald's Store in Hot Coffee features handmade hoop cheese, hand-dipped ice cream and — you guessed it — hot coffee. The store was established in 1930.*



The Coffee Cup Restaurant, Pensacola, Florida

The Coffee Cup Restaurant in Pensacola, Florida, is always worth the trip. There are church pews and chairs lined up outside to keep customers comfortable while they wait for one of the iconic restaurant's 68 seats. This old-school brick diner on Cervantes Street has been serving breakfast for over 70 years. Order the battered and fried French toast, biscuits with tomato gravy, or Nassau Grits with ham or sausage — you won't be disappointed.

Nassau Grits

Serves 6

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 6 strips bacon
 - 1 medium yellow onion, minced
 - 1 green bell pepper, minced
 - 1 cup cooked minced ham or ground sausage
 - 1 (8-ounce) can stewed tomatoes
 - 3 cups cooked grits
- Salt and pepper, to taste
Hot sauce to taste

HOW TO PREP

In a large frying pan over medium heat, fry bacon until crisp. Drain on paper towel. Reserve about 3 tablespoons bacon drippings.

Sauté onions and bell peppers in drippings, about 5 minutes or until onions are translucent. Add ham or sausage and stewed tomatoes with their juice and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the moisture has evaporated, about 30 minutes.

Stir in grits until well blended. Season with salt, pepper and hot sauce. Crumble the bacon on top and serve.

ROUSES MARKETS

JUST CAUGHT

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CAFECITO

by Chef David Guas



My exiled Cuban family members, both in New Orleans and Miami, have long since made peace with the rhythms of life in those cities, but they've never forgotten their birthplace. When it comes to things like coffee, or *café con leche*, or the darkest and most delicious of them all — the *cortadito* — the old ways die hard. Just talking about it, I can smell the aromas from here! But it is truly amazing what satisfaction coffee brings to the whole ritual of every gathering.

As far back as I can remember, which is around the age of about five or six, a requisite stop for this grandson was the home of my paternal grandmother — “Granny” — in New Orleans. Originally from Amite, Louisiana, Granny met my Cuban-born grandfather, known fondly to us as *Abuelo*, in New Orleans, where he swooped her away from her collegiate studies at Newcomb and brought her back to Havana to live during those swanky decades on the island. *Abuelo* graduated from law school at Tulane, and only returned to the city for occasional visits. The rest is in the history books.

Saturdays with Granny were special, and coffee was our comforting little secret. She repeatedly warned, “Don’t tell your mom I have you drinking coffee!” When I was that tender age, it was 80% milk, hot and steamy, with a few dribbles of coffee to nurture my developing taste buds. As I grew inches taller, the percentage of milk lowered, and in rolled the caffeine. Granny would take out the steam-pressure coffee maker known to most as the Moka pot, and she would put it directly on the flame of the gas stove. Immediately, it would begin to percolate. There was a whole ritual with demitasse cups laid out in perfect order along with sugar, a spoon and a carafe of whole milk. A sweet, caramel fizz coated the top of the cup — it’s the creamy head that Cubans call *espumita*. The magical result of the first sips of brew laced with sugar was incredible. Sometimes my pulse couldn’t just beat; it had to race. I was on a perpetual Bustelo buzz. I can vividly remember the vibrant yellow and red tin container of *Café Bustelo* that sat on the shelf, and the pungent smell when Granny popped open the lid. However, at that age, I was more interested in reaching my hands into the *other* tin that I knew contained assorted butter cookies with heavy chunks of sugar. I believe I danced around all afternoon, wide-eyed and prematurely contemplating my next moves, but honestly with nowhere to go!

My father had no qualms about taking me to Miami when I turned 15, to experience his closest connection to his native Cuba: the infamous cousins! My cousins introduced me to the absolutely strangest practice I’d ever seen — all these men standing around at counters with coffee-filled styrofoam cups, pouring small shots into other minuscule cups, customarily called *cafecitos*. I’m talking about cups the size of spit cups at the dentist’s office. Sipping at *cafecito* counters is a daily social event in the Cuban neighborhoods of Miami. It’s a cheap thrill that only costs about a dollar. But it was so amazing to watch the artistry at work in the coffee shops or grocery stores of Little Havana, as the coffee and sugar were swiftly stirred into golden, frothy foam. There were no cookies to add to the sweetness; the cousins would have toasted bread drenched in butter and cut into finger-sized strips to dip into the coffee. It tempered the strength, but I was still in love with the flavor. It was this very Cuban espresso that made a man out of a boy my age.



▲ Chef David Guas

That’s the Cuban side of the family; my other side’s roots are permanently “grounded” in New Orleans. As a native, I was weaned on *café au lait* and beignets. That early encounter with chicory coffee and all its bitterness was thankfully softened by warm whole milk. The amazing marriage between coffee and sweet things was a given, and the excess powdered sugar on the plate was the much appreciated *lagniappe*. Just like dipping the buttered bread strips in the *cafecito*, the first bite of warm beignet dipped in the *café au lait* signaled the inception of a most cherished coffee ritual.

I’ve come to realize in my own restaurant, Bayou Bakery, Coffee Bar & Eatery in Arlington, Virginia, where I have Cuban Day each Wednesday, that the guests who come in have a Cuban mentality. It’s about who’s feeding you. Who’s eating with you. Dining is all about belonging. In the fine Cuban *émigré* tradition, the food scene is sustained by its coffee first, and by the long-held customs of how said coffee is prepared. To drink it is not just traditional; it’s required. And while my restaurant’s reputation for exemplary coffee service pays tribute to my own heritage, it also rides on the powerful individual resonance that the coffee ritual has for so many others. ■





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THE Brew's BROTHERS

by Mary Beth Romig

I did not grow up in a coffee-drinking household. Hot tea was my mom's go-to beverage. I did not grow up in a peanut-butter-and-jelly-eating household either, but that is a story for another day.

My father did drink hot coffee, dripped in an old-fashioned percolator. The coffee was thick and inky, looked and smelled strong, and was kept in a plastic canister in the refrigerator until he drank all of its contents — generally, within a week or so. He would heat up less than a mugful, then add milk, creating his own version of café au lait. I eventually “learned” to drink coffee in a teachers' lounge, where the hot beverage serves as a must-consume, or so it seems, for faculty and staff across all grade levels.

A friend recalled her earliest experience with coffee concentrate, which was different from my dad's. Her father cold-brewed thick Union Coffee in a Filtron coffeemaker, a process in which time takes the place of

heat (the Filtron process is the original cold-brewed coffee system). Her dad's ritual was to drain the liquid concentrate in the morning into an empty Chivas Regal Scotch bottle, which he stored in the refrigerator.

Many families on the Gulf Coast have made coffee concentrate at home, as was the case with the McCrory family, owners of New Orleans Coffee Company and creators of CoolBrew Coffee.

Jeff McCrory, company president, who, along with his brother, Gregory, operates the business his father established nearly 30 years ago, has his own coffee tale to tell.

“We drank instant coffee when we were kids; however, my grandparents brewed CDM coffee with chicory,” recalled Jeff McCrory. “I thought the brewed stuff they made tasted bitter, and I always preferred the instant, although I'm not really sure I enjoyed it.”

As McCrory also remembers, his father, Phillip, drank a lot of coffee. Director of pharmacy services for the State Office of Public Health, and often described as a Renaissance man, Phil was on a quest for a better-tasting, less acidic coffee, begun when a friend gave him a Filtron cold-water coffee brewer to make concentrate. The family voted his new version a hit. That was in 1986, when coffeehouses weren't anywhere near as plentiful as they are today.

“When dad starting making CoolBrew, blending it with chicory and other stuff, it was the first time I tasted coffee I liked,” said McCrory. “And I would have friends over after high school, and Dad invited us to try it, and all the guys liked it. That's when we came up with the crazy idea to put this stuff in a bottle and sell it.”

New Orleans' rich coffee heritage proved an ideal backdrop for the elder McCrory's quest, as he pored over a wealth of information to aid him in repurposing the more than 150-year-old cold filtration process.

What Is Cold Brewing?

Cold brewing is the unique process of capturing the full flavor of freshly roasted coffee using only cold water, extracting the most flavorful essence from freshly roasted coffee and using absolutely no heat. The cold-drip process calls for steeping ground coffee over a long period, which minimizes acidity and celebrates the beans' natural flavors. There is no heat used in a cold-brew process, so most of the acids normally found in hot brewed coffee remain in the grounds, producing a rich, smooth and less bitter coffee — or, in the case of CoolBrew, a rich and smooth coffee concentrate without the bitterness.

The McCrorys believed in their product and decided to act on their crazy idea. They started their company, then called Coffee Extractors of New Orleans, in a building in Covington.

“Few people had heard of iced coffee back then, but its popularity grew,” recalled McCrory, who decided working alongside his father in the coffee venture was preferable to college. “I liked what we were doing and creating,” he said. In 1989, they changed the company's name to New Orleans Coffee Company.



Family Business

Today, the family brews and distributes the all-natural, liquid coffee concentrate from a warehouse in the Mid-City neighborhood of New Orleans. Phil has since passed away, but Jeff and Greg are at the helm, with the third generation — Jeff's son Dylan — now on the team.

More entrepreneurs have entered the iced-coffee-at-home craze. Rouses also stocks its shelves with N.O. Brew, which markets its product line with the slogan “*Big. Easy. Iced Coffee.*” N.O. Brew also sells fresh handcrafted ground coffee.

And over 35 years ago, coffee pioneer Phyllis Jordan, founder of PJ's Coffee, the local coffeehouse institution, developed and perfected the cold-drip process that helped make PJ's an original New Orleans icon. I had my first iced coffee at the original PJ's on Maple Street in the mid-1980s. I was hooked from my first sip. Today, PJ's markets cold-brew “bean bags,” pouches of ground coffee beans that allow consumers the ability to craft their own iced coffee concentrate.

For the McCrorys, the fun is in continuing their father's legacy, experimenting with different flavors and coming up with new ideas. “It was fun to be in the business when the cold-brew movement began and then took off, especially over the last five years. And there is the constant pursuit to find the next *big thing*, the next crazy idea,” said McCrory.

A New Idea

For Jeff McCrory, the next crazy idea can be found on a stick. Literally. Called Café Bar, the new product sees him joining forces with Adrian Simpson, owner of New Orleans Ice Cream Co., which makes ice cream flavors inspired by the food-crazed culture and local tastes of New Orleans.

The ice cream company has its roots in New Orleans Coffee Company. Simpson



*Photo by J.T. Blatty
courtesy The New Orleans Advocate*

is a British native who attended LSU as an exchange student, and who years later returned to New Orleans to work in marketing for the McCrorys, specifically on the CoolBrew brand. Today, two coffee flavors Simpson has created — Coffee & Chicory and Café au Lait & Beignets — feature CoolBrew.

“I met Jeff and his family during my time at LSU and watched the McCrorys turn their business into a very successful operation, and I wanted to do the same,” said Simpson.

Simpson's professional expertise is in marketing. But what he lacks in formal culinary training, he makes up for in passion, ingenuity and vision. He began New Orleans Ice Cream Co. in 2006.

“My goal is to make the best ice cream anyone has ever tasted,” said Simpson.

Like McCrory, Simpson is always on a quest for the next crazy idea, which led to the two longtime friends' collaboration, Café Bar.

“Cold-brew coffee is such an ‘in’ thing, so why not combine it with premium, all-natural ice cream and put it on a stick?”



said Simpson. Simply described, Café Bar is basically a coffee shell with ice cream in the middle. “It's like having a coffeehouse in your freezer — all good stuff — and made with fair trade sugar. Any time of day, you can reach into your freezer and find six different varieties. Plus, it's got enough caffeine to wake up a small donkey and only 150 calories!” Simpson exclaimed. ■

“There is no heat used in a cold-brew process, so most of the acids normally found in hot brewed coffee remain in the grounds, producing a rich, smooth and less bitter coffee.”



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Ingredients

- 3 ounces CoolBrew Vanilla Coffee Concentrate
- 16 ounces Cream cheese (2, 8 oz packages)
- ½ cup Sugar
- ½ teaspoon Vanilla extract
- 2 Eggs
- 1 Graham cracker crust (ready-to-use)
- Whipped cream (optional)

Method

Preheat oven to 350°. In a mixing bowl combine all ingredients and mix until smooth. Pour mixture into graham cracker crust and bake at 350° for 40 minutes. Remove from oven and refrigerate overnight. Slice and serve and/or top with whipped cream.



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Kettle of Fish

by Don Dubuc



“Well, it’s 4 a.m. I crawl out of bed, I put the coffee on and head for the shed ... load up the truck with all my gear, I got Don Dubuc ringing in my ear...”

That’s the beginning of the theme song that kicks off my Saturday morning program on the statewide *Outdoors with Don Dubuc* radio network. Notice that the first thing St. Charles Parish musical artist Reed Alleman suggests after “crawling out of bed” is to “put the coffee on...” It’s a safe bet that, if you’re heading out on your fishing or hunting trip, it’s close to the top of your list too. And while I’m sipping my coffee between 5 and 7 a.m. as I do my broadcast, I realize I’m probably talking to more coffee drinkers than anyone else on the radio!

Coffee has for a long time been the kick-starter many of us need to warm up after climbing into a cold tree stand or prior to heading a boat into a 20-knot north wind. It’s also been the soothing complement to a hearty camp breakfast or a stimulant for those post-trip stories told around a campfire or a crackling fireplace.

My lifelong love affair with coffee goes way back. My dad got me started. I remember how, whenever we’d visit my grandparents, everyone would sit around the kitchen table and ask, “How do you take your coffee?” I’m not sure, but I think that expression is either a New Orleans or maybe even a general Southern thing. That was before family members communicated via Facebook, text messages and emails. Not that having a cup of joe doesn’t fit well in those online chat rooms, but those precious in-person, family-and-friend visits go better — so much better — over a cup of coffee.

Special occasion coffee turned into a daily routine during my two-year stint in the U.S. Army. Now, if there’s anything lacking consistency, it’s Army or any military version of coffee. Mess hall coffee wasn’t that bad, but even the stuff that came in C ration boxes and had to be stirred with a screwdriver in a tactical or field situation — believe it or not, even *that* was always welcome.

Over time I seem to have become pretty much an all-day, anytime coffee consumer. The colder the temperature, the higher the coffee flow rate. Nighttime coffee usually follows a good dinner or a frogging or bowfishing trip. Otherwise, I’m perpetually looking forward to that first morning cup.

Of course, we all have those what I call “special coffee moments.” I’m not sure whether it’s the coffee tasting better as the result of the moment or the moment enjoyed more because the coffee’s part of it. Whichever — certain moments and coffee are as good a match as gumbo and rice — or gumbo and potato salad, for that matter. A personal favorite example of this is that precise moment that comes just minutes before legal shooting time during duck season. For those who are still hours away from your first morning cup, here’s the scenario: You’re dressed in as much waterproof, insulated, camouflage clothing and waders as you can fit on a human body. You head out, sometimes breaking ice (much less frequently thanks to modern global warming) into the dark world of early-morning black water and an array of unusual odors, sometimes braving ravenous insects and slippery serpents before finally arriving at your duck-hunting destination. After untangling and throwing out a few dozen decoys, you settle in under the cover of roseau cane and marsh

grass. Along the eastern horizon you begin to see a faint glimmer rising above the shoreline. It's just minutes before that long-awaited "30 minutes before sunrise" legal shooting time. Now is the time to pour from the thermos the hot liquid that will be a toast to the start of a great hunt. While the coffee's going down, there's those stimulating thoughts of squadrons of waterfowl responding to the caller's quacks, then dropping out of the clouds and into the decoys bobbing on the pond. That's followed by you and your buddies putting on what can only be described as a "clinic" on shotgunning skills — all those visions seen in the pre-dawn darkness while savoring that strong, sweet or special-flavored elixir. Wow, gets me fired up just thinking about it!

Even on warm summer days, many of us dedicated coffee drinkers will grab a sip here and there throughout the day. But on those frigid days when we really need our coffee hot, the container can fail to do its job. Thanks to modern technology, that's happening a lot less often. Just as there's been science-based research and testing to produce containers that keep liquids, foods, baits and even fish colder longer, that same effort has resulted in the production of containers to keep coffee and other drinks and foods hot longer. The result has been a proliferation of companies specializing in making and marketing thermos bottles, mugs and cups that extend the hot and warm life of your coffee far beyond those of the past. While millennials certainly find it hard to believe, many of us remember those plastics thermos bottles of the 1960s era that had glass (yes, glass) inserts that would keep coffee hotter longer. Even though they were easily broken, they were replaceable, and I guess the sale of inner glass inserts was someone's brainstorm on how to ensure recurring sales. I don't know how many, but I'm sure there were lawsuits brought forward by consumers who poured their coffee

filled with glass shards and crystals into their cups. I personally had it happen to me. Then came solid stainless steel with insulation between the inner and outer liners — a drastic improvement. Over the last decade, a variety of super-insulated drink cups and thermos, in myriad shapes and sizes, have arrived on the scene, and they are amazingly efficient at keeping our coffee hot for extended periods of time. Some are pretty pricey, but they make excellent gifts for anyone who takes their coffee along on their daily commute.

If you haven't entered the modern world of super-insulated coffee mugs, here are a few tips to keep your coffee the temperature you like it. First, if your mug is microwave compatible, heat your coffee in the container you drink from. You know those promotional can coozies we all get to help keep our drinks cold? The extra insulation in one of those coozies can, if it fits your coffee cup, also help keep it warm. Finally, if you find yourself needing a temporary coffee mug, while not particularly environmentally friendly, those Styrofoam go-cups do a better job than any other non-insulated type.

Besides being a warmer-upper, just holding a hot cup of coffee can win friends and influence people. Check this out:

An experiment conducted at the University of Colorado Boulder and published in the journal *Science* found that "participants who briefly held a cup of hot coffee judged a target person as having a 'warmer' personality." Works for me!



So how do I take my coffee? I like a wide variety of flavors and blends. My favorite is a dark roast, with no sugar *but* with a shot of Italian Sweet Cream. Matter of fact, I think I'll go have one now. ■

> The Outdoors Guy

Don Dubuc, The Outdoors Guy, can be heard on Gulf Coast radio stations including WWL, KPEL, WNXX, KNXX and KAOK in Louisiana, and WAVH in Mobile, Alabama.





The Jambalaya Capital OF THE WORLD

by Marcel Bienvenu + photo by Denny Culbert

The Gulf Coast can boast of countless festivals that celebrate music, food, culture and anything else that is deemed worthy of recognition.

One festival that has long interested me is the Jambalaya Festival celebrated in Gonzales, Louisiana. While the Jambalaya

Festival Association was chartered in 1967, the first festival wasn't held till the following year. It was 15 years or so after that that I had the honor of being on the panel of judges for the competition. I was surprised at the strict rules that are applied to the participating teams. For example,

each team gets the same amount of rice and chicken, and has access only to other ingredients (such as onions, bell peppers, celery, red hot sauce, salt, red and black pepper, garlic, cooking oil) sanctioned by the Jambalaya Festival Association. No one can bring any other type of seasoning or “secret ingredient” to the competition. Participants must supply their own black iron pot with a lid, and a paddle with which to stir. The jambalaya must be cooked over a wood fire — and the wood has to be furnished by the festival association.

Having spent a good deal of time as a youngster at my father's elbow while he cooked over a wood fire, I am always in awe of and have great admiration for cooks who can control wood fires.) I was also intrigued by the jambalaya itself. Although I have consumed several types of jambalaya in my lifetime, none resembled the ones served to me at the festival. They were brown — the only meat they contained was chicken. In my family circle of cooks, the characteristics of the jambalaya varied from cook to cook. A favorite family recipe contained chunks of pork, smoked sausage *and* chicken, and contained some (keyword here is “some”) tomato product, like diced tomatoes, which, in my opinion, added a depth of flavor. When our family spent a weekend at our camp at Cypremort Point on Vermilion Bay, the jambalaya of the day featured shrimp and ham, tasso or smoked sausage, and was tomato-based.

But that was *my* family.

In the book *Stir the Pot: the History of Cajun Cuisine*, I wrote quite a bit about jambalaya. Here are a few of my observations:

Just as everyone has their own variation of gumbo, so too will you find great variety among jambalaya recipes. Some will argue that jambalaya should be brown, while others will tell you no, it should be red (made so by the addition of tomatoes).

In Gonzales, for example, the locals will tell you that you will never find a good jambalaya in New Orleans because they make the red version. It is an article of faith with these folks that jambalaya should be, must be, brown. Gonzales must know what it's talking about — after all, it was named by the Louisiana legislature to be the jambalaya capital of the world, and for over 30 years the town has hosted an annual

cook-off whose winner is named World Jambalaya Cooking Champion.

But then again, there are zealous cooks who claim that the addition of tomatoes makes for a richer-tasting jambalaya.

Who's right, who's wrong? That depends. Let it be understood that there is one thing upon which Cajuns *do* agree when it comes to food, and that is, it must taste good. On that score, both brown and red are fine. Which you prefer is a matter for your own taste buds.

Just as there are arguments about the color of a good jambalaya, so are there discussions as to what ingredients should be included in the dish. There are those that say to use only ham and shrimp, while others argue, "Non, just shrimp." And yet another says, "You have to put lots of chopped onions, bell peppers and celery," only to have his cousin say, "Non, just a little."

Then to really confuse the issue, there's a difference of opinion about when to add the rice. The addition of raw rice to the pot, according to one school of thought, allows all the flavors of the ingredients to be absorbed together. The trick then is that there must be the right amount of liquid in proportion to the amount of rice to ensure that the rice doesn't get gummy. The experts say that the rice must not clump together. Although it strikes fear in many hearts, there are some cooks who advocate cooking the rice separately and adding it to the pot of the cooked ingredients afterwards — just don't tell anybody.

So who are you going to believe? The thing to do is to try it for yourself using whatever comes to mind, in whatever combination your taste buds tell you is right. ■

Jambalaya, My Way

"This recipe is made with tomatoes, so don't even think of serving it to anyone from Gonzalez." —Marcelle

Makes 4 to 6 servings

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

6 tablespoons butter
 ½ cup chopped green onions
 ½ cup chopped yellow onions
 1 large green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
 1 cup chopped celery
 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 ½ pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
 ½ pound cubed ham or tasso
 ½ pound smoked sausage, cut crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices
 2 cups diced tomatoes
 1 cup chicken stock
 Salt and cayenne pepper, to taste
 2 bay leaves
 1¼ cups long-grain rice, uncooked
 TABASCO® Hot Sauce, to taste

HOW TO PREP

Heat the butter in a large, heavy pot over medium heat. Add the onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic. Cook, stirring, until vegetables are soft and lightly golden, 10 to 12 minutes.

Add the shrimp, ham and sausage. Cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the shrimp turn pink.

Stir in the tomatoes and chicken broth. Season to taste with salt and cayenne pepper.

Add the bay leaves and the rice. Cover and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook until the rice is tender and all the liquid is absorbed, about 25 minutes.

Remove the bay leaves and serve. Pass the hot sauce!

Chef John Folsie's Pork, Chicken & Andouille Jambalaya

Serves 6

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1 pound cubed pork butt
 1 pound cubed chicken
 1 pound sliced andouille
 ¼ cup oil
 2 cups chopped onions
 2 cups chopped celery
 1 cup chopped bell pepper
 ¼ cup diced garlic
 7 cups chicken stock
 2 cups sliced mushrooms
 1 cup sliced green onions
 ½ cup chopped parsley
 Salt and black pepper, to taste
 Dash of Louisiana Gold Pepper Sauce
 4 cups Uncle Ben's® Long Grain Rice

HOW TO PREP

In a 2-gallon, cast-iron Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sauté cubed pork until dark brown on all sides and until some pieces are sticking to the bottom of the pot, approximately 30 minutes. This is very important, as the brown color of jambalaya is derived from the color of the meat.

Add cubed chicken and andouille, and stir for an additional 10 to 15 minutes, "long and low." Tilt the pot to one side and ladle out all oil except for one large spoonful. Add onions, celery, bell pepper and garlic. Continue cooking until all vegetables are well-caramelized; however, be very careful, as vegetables will tend to scorch since the pot is so hot.

Add chicken stock; bring to a rolling boil and reduce heat to simmer. Cook all ingredients in stock approximately 15 minutes for flavors to develop.

Add mushrooms, green onions and parsley. Season to taste using salt, pepper and Louisiana Gold. I suggest that you slightly over-season, since the rice tends to require a little extra seasoning. Add rice and bring to a rolling boil.

Reduce heat to very low, then cover and allow to cook 30 minutes, stirring once at 15 minutes. When cooked, stir again and let steam for 10 minutes.

➤ Gonzales Jambalaya Festival

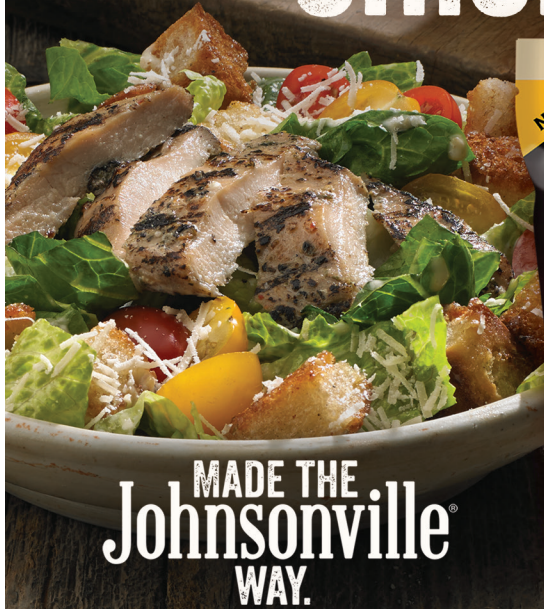
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"The Creole name 'jambalaya' is derived from the French word for ham, 'jambon,' and an African word for rice, 'yaya.' Yet, it is probable that Valencian paella is the forerunner of this classic Louisiana dish. Paella is made with a variety of ingredients including meat or seafood, white rice and white beans. Sound familiar? It's easy to see why Louisianans usually top their meat-flavored jambalaya with a healthy ladle of creamy, white beans. The dish is truly a mélange of cultures."

—Chef John Folsie

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Cheddar, Ham & Asparagus Rosti Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
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| 1½ pounds thin-skinned potatoes, such as Yukon gold, shredded (4 medium) | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 1 cup thinly sliced asparagus | ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper |
| 1 cup diced ham (4 ounces) | Pinch nutmeg |
| 1 tablespoon minced shallot | 2 teaspoons canola oil, divided |
| | 4 ounces Cabot Seriously Sharp Cheddar (about 1 cup) |

DIRECTIONS 1.) Place potatoes in a colander and squeeze excess moisture from them. Blot with paper towels. Toss potatoes, asparagus, ham, shallot, salt, pepper and nutmeg in a medium bowl. Heat 1 teaspoon canola oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium high heat until the oil is shimmering but not smoking. Add potato mixture, and spread out into an even layer. Cook undisturbed until the bottom of the potato is browned, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove skillet from the heat. Run a spatula around rosti to make sure it is completely loose in the skillet. Invert a large flat platter or un-rimmed baking sheet over the skillet and grasp together with oven mitts. Flip rosti onto the platter or baking sheet. 2.) Wipe skillet clean with a paper towel. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon oil to the skillet and place over medium-high heat. Slide the rosti into the skillet, return to the heat and sprinkle with the cheddar. Continue cooking, adjusting heat down to medium-low as necessary to prevent burning. Cook until the bottom is browned and the potato is cooked through, 6 to 8 minutes.

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GINGER VINAIGRETTE ORANGE, SPINACH, AVOCADO SALAD

Ingredients

- 3 cups raw baby spinach, de-stemmed
- 1 cup orange slices
- 1 medium avocado, diced or cubed

Dressing

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. sugar (can substitute for honey)
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, grated
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions

In a small bowl, mix the rice vinegar with the sugar, garlic, and grated ginger until the sugar is dissolved. Whisk in the olive oil and then season as desired with salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, add spinach, orange slices, and avocado. Add the dressing, toss and then serve immediately.

(Serving Size: 2)

For more recipes go to: avorecipes.com

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TRUE BLUE

by Patrick, Rouses Produce Director

Allen Eubanks of Lucedale, Mississippi, has been farming for a quarter of a century. He's the fourth generation in his family to work the soil. Eubanks Produce farms land in both Louisiana and Alabama, and Rouses buys fresh cantaloupes, watermelons, bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, sweet corn and, recently, sweet potatoes, plus a large portion of Mississippi blueberries from this family business.

We've been working with the Eubanks family for over a decade. It's just one of many long-term relationships Rouses maintains with growers on the Gulf Coast. We talk to local farmers every day to make sure the fruits and vegetables you find at Rouses Markets are the best they can be. And of course, we visit the farms every week to check each farmer's progress. We're in the fields right now checking blueberries. Peak production for the fruit ranges from the end of May through July 4.

Local blueberries — in fact, almost all of the blueberries planted in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama — are rabbiteye (*Vaccinium ashei*). They're native to the southeastern United States and tolerant of the heat typically experienced in this region. They have their own bee, which "buzz pollinates" their flowers — the southeastern blueberry bee, which looks and sounds like a bumble bee, but is smaller and faster. Honeybees, bumble bees and carpenter bees are also attracted to blueberry flowers. ■

Ocean Springs Red, White & Blueberry Festival

This annual festival is a community, family-fun event, held on Saturday, June 3, 2017.

➤ Ripe for the Picking

My wife Rikki and I like to take our kids Alex, Mason and Parker blueberry-picking near their grandparents' house in Mt. Hermon, Louisiana. My in-laws, Terry and Ronnie Moak, and their neighbors have blueberry bushes on their property, some as old as 20 years. Washington Parish's rich, fertile soil is great for growing blueberries. We source a lot of Rouses Markets' Louisiana blueberries from the area. It's also where we get most of our Louisiana watermelons.

—Patrick, Rouses Produce Director

At Season's Peak

Alabama Silver King Corn

In Lower Alabama, Silver King is, well, king. We get ours from the Bengtson family's centuries-old farm in Robertsdale, Alabama. Silver King has bright, white kernels and a high sugar content, which gives it an exceptionally sweet flavor. Rouses also has bi-colored corn and Sweet Sunshine corn from neighboring Florida.

National Corn on the Cob Day is Sunday, June 11, 2017.

Silver King corn is best served firm; a quick blanching is all you need to cook it to perfection. Boil in salted water (there's no truth to the old wives' tale that salt in the water can make corn tough) for three minutes or less.

➤ Alabama Coffee

Red Diamond and Fairhope Roasting Company coffees are available at Rouses Markets in Alabama.

Louisiana Creole Tomatoes

Creole tomatoes may not be as pretty as their beefsteak and Roma cousins — they tend to be knobby, with orange-red to bright-red skin and flesh — but you can't beat the taste. Creole tomatoes are grown in the fertile fields of the southeastern part of Louisiana, in particular St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes. The unique river soils and warm climate of these parishes produce sugar-sweet tomatoes with an exceptionally intense "tomatoe-y" flavor. Although the Creole tomato was named the official vegetable of Louisiana in 2003, a tomato — even a Creole tomato — is technically a fruit.

French Market Creole Tomato Festival

Live music, food booths and chef demonstrations Saturday & Sunday, June 10 & 11, 2017.

Vidalia Sweet Onions & Carrots

Vidalia onions represent about 40% of the total national spring onion production. They are named for the area where they are grown near the town of Vidalia, Georgia. The abundant rainfall and low amount of sulfur in the sandy soil in Vidalia make the onions extra-sweet. Those same conditions yield Vidalia's delicious sweet carrots.

Mississippi Blueberry Pancakes *Makes about 20 pancakes*

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 3 tablespoons sugar
 - 1½ teaspoons baking powder
 - 1½ teaspoons baking soda
 - 1¼ teaspoons kosher salt
 - 2½ cups buttermilk
 - 2 large eggs
 - 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
 - 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup Mississippi blueberries, washed
- Rouses vegetable oil for the pan

HOW TO PREP

Heat oven to 325 degrees.

Whisk dry ingredients together in a bowl, reserving the 2 tablespoons of flour. Make a well in the center. Pour the buttermilk into the well and crack eggs into buttermilk. Pour the melted butter into the mixture. Starting in the center, whisk everything together, moving towards the outside of the bowl, until all ingredients are incorporated. Be careful not to overbeat.

Place 2 tablespoons of flour in a small dish. Add ½ cup blueberries and toss to coat. This will prevent them from sinking to the bottom when folded into the batter.

Fold blueberries into batter.

Heat a large nonstick griddle or skillet over low heat for about 5 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil to the skillet. Turn heat up to medium-low. Using a measuring cup, ladle ½ cup batter into the skillet per pancake.

Flip pancakes after bubbles appear on the surface and bottoms become brown, about 2 to 4 minutes. Cook until the other sides are lightly browned. Serve warm topped with remaining blueberries and syrup.



Coffee-Glazed Carrots

Serves 6

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1½ pounds Vidalia carrots
- 1½ tablespoons Rouses Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh thyme, roughly chopped
- ½ teaspoon Rouses salt
- ½ teaspoon Rouses black pepper
- ¼ cup brewed coffee
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Steen's® Pure Cane Syrup

HOW TO PREP

Heat oven to 425 degrees.

Peel and wash carrots. On a large rimmed baking sheet, toss carrots with olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper. Roast for 10 minutes.

In a small saucepan, bring the coffee, balsamic vinegar and Steen's to a boil. Cook until the glaze is reduced to approximately half, about 5 minutes.

Remove the carrots from the oven. Pour on the glaze, tossing to coat. Return the carrots to the oven and cook for an additional 10-12 minutes, tossing once halfway through. Carrots are done when they are tender, but not yet completely soft.

Lower Alabama Shrimp Boil *Serves 6*

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 6 lemons, halved
- 1 pound bag seafood boil
- 4 ounce bottle concentrated liquid seafood boil
- 1 bottle Alabama Sunshine Jalapeno Hot Sauce
- 3 pounds red potatoes, skin on, quartered
- 4 large white onions, peeled and quartered
- 2 heads of garlic, peeled
- 10 ears Alabama Silver King sweet corn, cut into 3-inch pieces
- 3 pounds Conecuh® Smoked Sausage, cut into 1- to 2-inch coins
- 10 pounds 21-26 count Gulf shrimp, heads removed
- 1 stick unsalted butter

HOW TO PREP

Fill your boiling pot halfway with water. Add the lemons, seafood boil and hot sauce. Place the lid on the pot and set propane burner on high. Bring water to a rolling boil.

Remove the lid and add the garlic and potatoes. Continue boiling for 12 minutes.

Add the onions, corn and sausage. Bring back to a full rolling boil.

Add the shrimp. Cook until shrimp are pink and separating from their shells, about 3 minutes. Stir in the butter. Add ice to the pot to stop the shrimp from cooking. Let the iced shrimp soak for 10 minutes before draining.





EAT RIGHT *With* ROUSES

by Esther, Rouses Dietitian

As teenagers in high school, my best friend, Katie, and I were obsessed with coffeehouses. There was a CC's on our route to Baton Rouge High, and some days we would stop on the way there *and* back. We always ordered Super Grande White Chocolate and Caramel Mochasipi, frothy espresso drinks that we downed in minutes. It makes me cringe to think I was slurping down an extra 500 calories and 72 grams of added sugar with every cup.

I wish I still had the metabolism of a teenager. Today when Katie and I get together, we still usually go for coffee, but now we're ordering iced coffees instead.

In the 2016 February-March issue of *My Rouses Everyday* magazine, I wrote about coffee finally being addressed in the newest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The guidelines state that moderate coffee consumption, about three to five cups a day, can be incorporated into a healthy eating pattern.

In addition to prolonging your morning energy, that beloved cup of joe could mean a longer life. Several studies have shown a lower risk of mortality with each cup of coffee, up to about four cups. Coffee may also reduce the risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease, especially in women. Researchers at Harvard found that three to five cups of coffee a day provided the most protection against cardiovascular disease.

Coffee drinking has long been associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. Individuals who drink six cups a day may have as much as a 35% reduced risk of developing the disease. Fortunately, decaf drinkers enjoy the same reduced risk.

Coffee may help prevent certain types of cancer, including liver, prostate, breast and lung cancer. In addition to protecting against liver cancer, it may also protect against liver disease. Researchers have suggested that drinking two or more cups a day can reduce liver disease risks by as much as 66%. Furthermore, coffee consumption is linked to many brain benefits. An increase in consumption has shown lower risks for depression, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

While the suspected benefits are promising, remember that what you add to your cup can make a difference. Black coffee is best — a typical cup contains only two to five calories. When it comes to milk and creamers I usually recommend the classics, starting with low-fat milk. If low-fat milk doesn't suit your fancy, try whole milk or regular half-and-half, but keep in mind that a tablespoon of half-and-half adds 20 calories and a tablespoon of whole milk adds about 10 calories. While that doesn't sound like much, if you drink five cups a day, that's an extra 50-100 calories.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting your added sugar intake to five teaspoons, or 25 grams a day. Because of this I recommend trying a zero-calorie sweetener such as Stevia or Swerve Sweetener, or even vanilla extract. This will give you some sweetness without the extra sugar.

Whatever way you like it, you can drink coffee knowing you may be doing something good for your health; just lay low on the Mochasippis, please. ■

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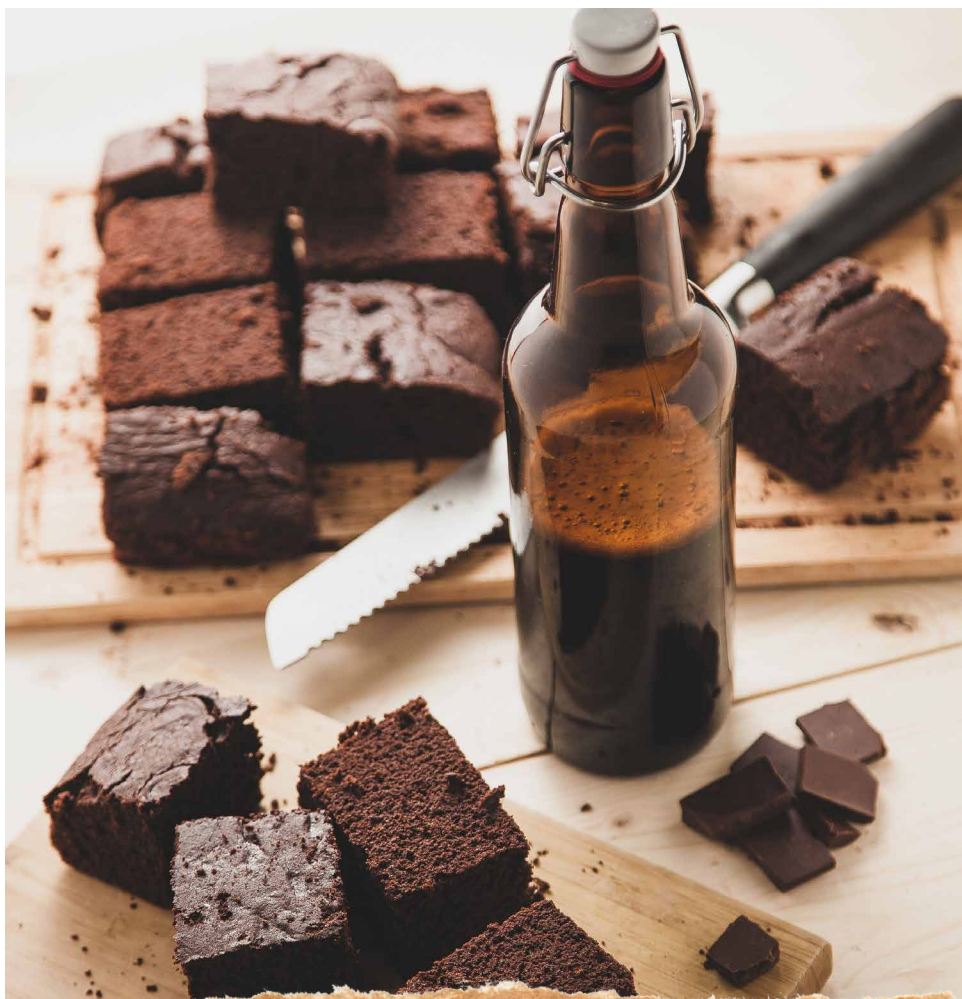
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TWIST & STOUT

by Nora McGunnigle

Porters and stouts — they're both dark beers, and they sometimes seem to be interchangeable. But what makes a stout a stout and a porter a porter?

Well, the porter came first, back in the early 18th century, around the time of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. It was the first widely made commercial style of beer, and the name derives from its popularity with the working class “porters” who delivered goods from the docks all over the cities and towns. Although the color is dark brown, it is still very mild-tasting, with a softer, lighter mouthfeel than most stouts and a fairly low alcohol by volume (ABV).

The British porter has evolved over the centuries into a variety of styles, including robust porter, which contains a bit more bitterness and roasted notes than the original; American imperial porter, which has a higher ABV but still has no bitter or black malt characteristics; and the Baltic-style porter, a high-alcohol, deeply flavored style produced by cold-fermenting, or lagering, for a longer period of time.

Some say that the flavor profile of the Baltic porter essentially makes it a stout — which is basically a bigger, badder porter with more intense, roasted flavors. The name for the style came from Guinness, which called

one of its first products a “Stout Porter.” The styles have evolved separately since then, with stout styles ranging from milk/sweet English stouts, Irish dry stouts and oatmeal stouts to American stouts and Russian imperial stouts.

Although, historically, the term “stouts” has referred to stronger porters, nowadays stouts can be low-alcohol, mild and not “heavy” on the tongue, but rather silky and well-rounded. The main difference between the porter and the stout that can be consistently pointed to is darkness of color. Stouts are generally black, while porters are usually dark brown with ruby highlights, a difference that seems negligible until you hold a glass of each up to the light.

Stouts also use unmalted but deeply roasted barley grain (in a process similar to the way coffee beans are processed). It's the roasted barley that both gives the stout its trademark dark color as well as the chocolate and coffee notes that are naturally occurring in stouts, even if there's no actual chocolate, coffee or vanilla added to the beer. For this reason, it's common for stouts to be accentuated with those ingredients. And with porters, adding coffee or other ingredients rounds out the flavor profile which are, in general, a bit lighter than stouts.

The fact that coffee beans and the specialty grains for these dark beers are roasted in a very similar fashion is another reason they complement each other so well. And beer drinkers can harness the power of coffee's caffeine to counteract the sleepiness that can accompany a session of beer drinking. Coffee also can add a unique element to any beer, since there are hundreds and hundreds of varieties of beans by region and roast.

Thibodaux's Mudbug Brewery brews a play on the classic coffee drink with its Café Au Lait milk/sweet stout, made with cold brew Community Coffee Breakfast Blend and milk sugar. And Parish Brewing out of Broussard has collaborated with Lafayette coffee shop and roaster Rêve Coffee Roasters to create a strongly flavored coffee stout that is almost like a pint of iced coffee, with the bitterness of both the grains and the beans perfectly complementing each other.

Chafunkta Brewing in Mandeville has a flagship beer, Old 504, which is a robust porter infused with coffee from Orleans



“It’s the roasted barley that both gives the stout its trademark dark color as well as the chocolate and coffee notes that are naturally occurring in stouts, even if there’s no actual chocolate, coffee or vanilla added to the beer.”

Coffee Exchange and vanilla from Ronald Reginald’s Vanillas. Although the flavors created by the brewing and additives are rich and decadent, it’s still a great beer to drink in the summertime.

Shiner/Spoetzl Brewing celebrated its 108th birthday with a limited release of Cold Brew Coffee Ale, which, though not labeled as such, was actually a lighter porter made with Austin-based Chameleon Cold-Brew coffee.

Sam Adams’ Nitro beer lineup includes a Nitro Coffee Stout that uses a combination of Indonesian Sumatra Mandheling and Indian Monsoon Malabar coffee beans. The Indian Monsoon Malabar beans are aged in a process reminiscent of the bygone days of importing and exporting, when the sun never set on the British Empire. The roasters re-create the humid wind and rain that would affect a boat sailing in monsoon season for three months or so. (This is actually not even the craziest way people age their coffee beans; just look up “civet coffee” and you’ll see what I mean.)

Wisacre Brewing (from Memphis) and

Left Hand Brewing (from the Boulder, CO area) are new additions to the Gulf Coast beer market; both bring well-regarded coffee beers for us to enjoy. One of Wisacre’s most popular beers is a coffee milk stout called Gotta Get Up To Get Down, made with coffee beans from the Konga region of Ethiopia. Left Hand’s Hard Wired Nitro coffee porter is another beer packaged in the bottle with nitrogen (like Sam Adams’ beer discussed earlier) for a creamier consistency when poured quickly into a glass.

Bringing together two of the world’s favorite beverages is nothing less than genius. And the collaborations between microbreweries and small coffee roasters are great for communities, creating amazing opportunities for combining hundreds of flavors with the complex interplay between coffee beans, hops and grains. ■



Coffee Beer Brownies

Makes 12 large or 24 small brownies

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3½ ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup stout or robust porter like Chafunkta Brewing’s Old 504
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

HOW TO PREP

Place a rack in the center of the oven. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9” by 13” baking pan. Set aside.

Put 1 tablespoon of the flour in a small bowl. Add the chocolate chips. Toss to coat the chocolate (this will keep the chips from sinking to the bottom of the batter). Set aside.

In a medium bowl, sift together flour, cocoa powder and salt with a fork or wire whisk.

Melt the coarsely chopped semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pot of boiling water. In a small pan over medium heat, melt the butter until it just turns golden brown, about 5 minutes. Pour the butter into the chocolate and stir until combined. Remove the bowl from the heat and slowly stir in the beer.

In a separate medium bowl, whisk together eggs, vanilla and sugars until thick, about 2 minutes. Add the chocolate mixture and whisk to combine. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until all of the ingredients are well combined. Fold in the floured chocolate chips.

Pour mixture into the greased pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the edges of the brownies are firm and the center is set (use a toothpick to test for doneness). Remove from the oven and let cool completely in the pan before cutting into squares.



Café Brûlot

by Kit Wohl

There's not much more fun in my house than getting together in the kitchen and cooking with people you love, then serving the results to other people you love. And then there's the creative satisfaction of making something with a new twist that surprises everyone. We're looking for the ahhh.

My nephew was recruited to our kitchen as a youngster, learning how to use a knife, chop, fetch and load the dishwasher as

we cooked. It didn't scare him away. He kept coming back for more. He learned, he complained and then he learned some more. We nurtured his interest through culinary arts school, then watched (and suffered) as he went down the hard road of apprenticeship to become a full-fledged executive chef. I adored his fellow apprentices. They were hungry and broke. Food and money were motivators. We'd have them over when we were entertaining; one or two would be guests at the table

as the others cooked. The next time, the cooks would take a turn as guests. It was important for them to experience the joy of being on the receiving end of our culinary shenanigans. Contrary to the reality of their cooking school drudgery, they were in total command of their kitchen and meal service at my dinner parties.

There's respect (and awe) due to the men and women who work long hours in wicked conditions of heat and pressure. At home, the cook can laugh off a failure and pick up a pizza. In a restaurant, when the guest is not happy, the cook is shamed. Add cuts and burns, sore feet, hip problems and bad knees. Don't forget that most kitchen crews work in an alternate universe, on duty when we're not, from early mornings to late, late nights. That's punishment enough for anyone. A 12- to 16-hour day is not unusual. Restaurant apprentices and cooks busy climbing the ladder show up for work early, beg to learn and leave late.

So even knowing the rigors of that career, we staked him to culinary school. It was only right after his years of peeling potatoes and other indignities. Our only payment for subsidizing his tuition was that he was required to come home (and cook) for major holidays. We worked in the kitchen together, except *now* I was the helper and he was the chef. There was plenty I could learn from him. So we'd toss ideas around and ask each other, "What if we tried this instead of that?"

We played "What if?" with a good sense of humor, stacks of cookbooks to explore, and lots of coffee or adult beverages. To collaborate successfully, one must park preconceived notions at the door and be prepared to be a target of laughter.

So our mission that day was pudding cake. That's when dry ingredients dominate the wet ones, and a strange but magnificent separation occurs during baking. The pudding (or custard) combination sinks to the bottom since it is heavier, and the cake fills with air during baking, rising to the top.

We explored recipes and discussed ingredients, and how we could create something a little bit familiar that would still be a surprise.

We knew the process; it was all about the flavors. A riff on café brûlot was finally our answer. ■

Café Brûlot Pudding Cake

Makes 12 ovenproof Demitasse Cups
or 6 Custard Cups

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

1½ cups whole milk, scalded
1 cup sugar
¼ cup flour
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
Pinch salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
½ teaspoon lemon zest
1 teaspoon orange zest
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons cognac
4 large eggs, separated
4 tablespoons strong espresso
Espresso sticks (optional)
Orange and lemon curls (optional)
Cinnamon for sprinkling (optional)

HOW TO PREP

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a small saucepan, scald the milk. Set it aside.

In a large bowl, combine the sugar, flour, cinnamon, cloves, salt, melted butter, lemon and orange zest, lemon and orange juice, and cognac. Stir together to blend. This is the base mixture.

In another bowl, beat the egg yolks; add the scalded milk slowly, stirring constantly.

Whisk the egg mixture into the base mixture. In a perfectly clean bowl, beat or whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold into the base mixture.

Pour into 12 buttered ovenproof demitasse cups, 6 buttered custard cups or a buttered 1-quart casserole dish. Arrange cups or casserole in a larger baking pan, and carefully pour in approximately 1 inch of hot water. Bake in demitasse cups for 25 to 30 minutes; custard cups for 35 minutes; or a casserole dish for 45 minutes. Insert a toothpick into the dish to check if the cake is done, and the custard is firm. It should not jiggle.

Garnish with an espresso stick or curl of orange or lemon peel, and dust with cinnamon. Break the crust with a demitasse spoon, and pour ½ teaspoon of cognac or an orange-flavored liqueur into the “wound.” It might gild the lily, but then again, it is a sensational flourish.

BURNED COFFEE

Café brûlot is a special post-dinner libation usually consumed at famous, revered restaurants as a grand finale. It translates as the devil’s brew or, more literally, “burned coffee.”

Half of its appeal is the show — an experienced waiter plays with fire, holding high a clove-studded, spiraled orange peel on a fork while ladling flaming brandy down its curl, coaxing the liquid into a copper bowl of spicy coffee that scents the room. The flambé is a real crowd-pleaser, especially when the lights have been lowered for dramatic effect.

Some brave restaurateurs have their waiters drizzle brandy across the tablecloth with a flourish and light it aflame. It’s a magic trick. The brandy burns bright blue but quickly, not igniting the linen fabric. ■

Café Brûlot

Makes a quart, or about 20 demitasse cups

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

2 sticks cinnamon
10 cloves
½ cup simple syrup*
2 strips lemon peel
4 slices lemon, thin
4 strips orange peel
4 slices orange, thin
1 quart less 1 cup of dripped or very strong coffee
Quart jar with lid
Brandy
Splash of Cointreau or Grand Marnier®
(orange-flavored liqueurs, optional)
Ladle

HOW TO PREP

Combine the spices, citrus and simple syrup with the hot coffee. Allow it to steep as it cools to room temperature. Strain the liquid but don’t press the solids. Refrigerate the liquid in a covered jar. Discard the solids.

When it’s time to serve the coffee, turn the lights down in the room. Heat enough coffee for the number of servings needed slowly in a saucepan, taking care not to boil or burn it.

Pour about an ounce of brandy per serving into a metal ladle; warm it over the burner until it catches flame (you may help it along with a match). Lift the ignited ladle and pour as a flaming ribbon into the steaming, spiced coffee.

Serve the drink in demitasse cups.

*Simple syrup is equal parts water and granulated sugar, cooked over medium heat in a saucepan until the sugar dissolves. Any extra can be refrigerated — it comes in handy for making other cocktails.



▲ This traditional post-dinner concoction was originally called Café Brûlot Diabolique, or “Devilishly Burned Coffee.” It was invented at Antoine’s Restaurant by Jules Alciatore, the son of the restaurant’s founder.

[PAGE 54] Photo courtesy Antoine’s Restaurant. Café Brûlot is on the menu at only a handful of New Orleans’ finest restaurants, such as Antoine’s, Galatoire’s and Arnaud’s. The preparation is more than just an after-dinner cocktail; it is a piece of performance art. The stage is usually tableside, and the key props include ornate bowls, special ladle, and the recipe contents — cinnamon, clove, lemon, sugar, brandy and coffee. And of course — FLAME.

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Black Bean & Corn Salsa

Servings: 16 (about 2 oz each) Prep Time: 10 min



Ingredients:

- 1 (15oz) can Kuner's® Southwest Black Beans, drained, rinsed
- 1 (15oz) can Kuner's® Southwest Sweet Corn & Peppers, drained
- 1 (14.5oz) can Kuner's® Southwest Diced Tomatoes, drained
- ½ cup sliced green onions (about 4 large)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon grated lime peel
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Preparation:

In large bowl, combine all ingredients; mix well. Serve with tortilla chips.

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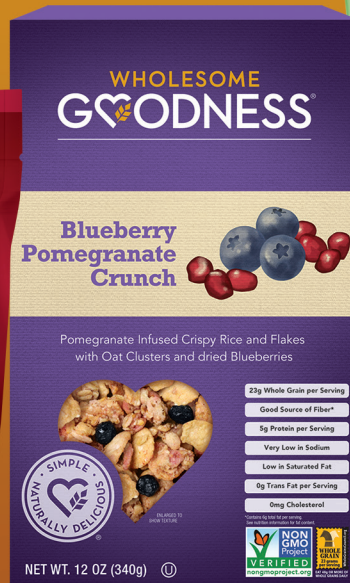


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Greek Pasta Salad

Ingredients:

- FROM THE OLIVE & ANTIPASTI BAR:
 - 1 1/2 cups DeLallo Greek Feta Salad, chopped (Feta Cheese, Calamata & Green Pitted Olives)
- 1 (1-lb.) pkg. DeLallo Shells, cooked & cooled
- 1/2 cup sliced pepperoncini peppers
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp. fresh chopped oregano
- 1/4 cup DeLallo Golden Balsamic Vinegar
- 1/2 cup DeLallo Extra Light Olive Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

In a large serving bowl, toss cooked pasta with DeLallo Greek Feta Salad, Pepperoncini, tomatoes and onion. In a separate bowl, whisk Dijon, oregano and vinegar, slowly introducing olive oil in a steady stream. Whisk together for another 1-2 minutes to incorporate. Salt and pepper to taste. Toss dressing with pasta to coat.

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