

What's Cookin'?

Our dining experiences shifted dramatically when California issued its stay-at-home order in March. Since then, many of us have been inspired to channel our creativity in the kitchen. Here at *Westways*, we asked our restaurant critics to share a recipe—one that brings them comfort—from a favorite eatery. For more recipes, visit AAA.com/westways.

INLAND EMPIRE & THE DESERT

The Quarter Creole Cuisine

201 N. Indian Hill Boulevard, Claremont
(909) 482-2200; thequartercreole.com

There's a genuine joyfulness expressed through the cuisine of New Orleans, and the people who cook it have a gift for finding a ray of sunshine in the midst of any challenge, whether a devastating hurricane or public health crisis. Claremont's The Quarter Creole Cuisine reflects the Big Easy's unique approach to cooking and life. Chef-owner Norm Theard appreciates the complex brew of French, Spanish, and African influences that contribute to his menu of Creole and Cajun specialties. In spirit, no dish is more quintessentially Louisiana than gumbo: Rustic or sophisticated, it is always comforting. Moreover, it often tastes better a few nights later after the soup's luscious flavors have melded. The Quarter's recipe is quite labor-intensive—it can take years to master the art of gumbo—but Theard's simplified version for home preparation still warms hearts.

By Roger Grady ♦ Photograph by Vanessa Stump
Food styling by Erica von Trapp



RECIPE

Creole Seafood Filé Gumbo

SERVES 4

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| 4 cups roasted chicken broth or store-bought broth | 1/2 pound New Orleans beef hot sausage, sliced |
| 2 cups shrimp broth (or clam juice) | 1 tablespoon granulated garlic |
| 2 cups clam juice (or oyster juice) | 1 tablespoon granulated onion |
| 1 bay leaf | 2 teaspoons dry thyme |
| 1/2 cup vegetable oil, plus 1 tablespoon | 2 teaspoons smoked paprika |
| 1/2 cup all-purpose flour | 2 teaspoons gumbo filé; see chef's notes |
| 1/2 cup finely diced onions | 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper |
| 1/4 cup diced bell pepper | Pinch of fresh Italian parsley, minced |
| 1/4 cup diced celery | 1 pound shrimp, peeled |
| 2 tablespoons minced garlic | 1 pound crab claws or legs; see chef's notes |
| 1/2 pound smoked pork sausage or kielbasa, sliced | 1 jar (8 ounces) fresh oysters with juice; see chef's notes |
| 1/2 pound chicken thigh (or breast) meat, diced | |

In a 6-quart or larger pot, bring both broths and clam juice to a simmer with 1 bay leaf. Then, in an iron skillet or fry pan, mix oil and flour together over high heat, stirring constantly with a metal whisk to create a roux. Continue until roux reaches peanut butter color, about 5 minutes. Turn off heat and add vegetables to roux. Stir for 1 minute and spoon roux with cooked vegetables into the gumbo broth pot. Continue to simmer. In a regular fry pan (not a nonstick pan), add 1 tablespoon of oil and place over high heat. Brown pork sausage. Scrape the caramelized bits off the pan, add pork to the broth. Repeat with chicken and then beef sausage, cooking them separately. Add garlic, granulated onion, thyme, paprika, gumbo filé, cayenne pepper, and parsley to gumbo and continue to simmer for 20 minutes. Oil will come to the surface. Skim oil with a ladle to remove. Bring gumbo to a rapid boil. Stir in the seafood, including oyster juice, and cover. Turn off heat and let rest about 5 minutes until shrimp just curl and change from translucent to white. Add salt and cayenne to taste. Serve in a big bowl with rice.

CHEF'S NOTES: Gumbo filé is made from ground sassafras leaves and has a woody flavor reminiscent of beet root. It can be found online or in your grocer's Cajun section. If you can't find oysters or crab, just add more shrimp.