

Cajun cuisine



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

" Cajun" and " Creole" cuisine is native to the " Bayou" country in the State of Louisiana. Creole cuisine was the creation of the French and Spanish settlers and their Black servants, and it is perhaps the best characterized by the sauces. Creole sauces are creamy and full-flavored with the rich use of herbs and spices. Cajun cooking is, generally speaking, a countrified version of Creole cuisine. It tends to be more robust and hot-peppery than its cousin. It took several generations for the emerging social structure and cultural identity to form in Cajun Louisiana.

Acadian refugees to Louisiana gradually divided into two relatively distinct classes: the elite planter class and the working farmer class. Acadians gradually adopted some of the Anglo (English-speaking) culture at all levels of social class. If you know what, where, when, and with whom to eat, then you know a great deal about the character of society. Food choices and production are influenced by biological and social needs, technology, and ecological restrictions. Two groups of people settled Louisiana during the eighteenth century, their class and origin shaped the types of foods they developed and ate.

The Cajun culture eventually developed as a blend of French, Spanish, and English cultures. " Dictionaries generally define Cajuns as 'a Louisianan who descends from French -speaking Acadians'" (Acadian, Cajun or Creole, p1) The Cajun people represent ingenuity, creativity, adaptability, and survival. The Cajuns used what they had in order to survive. Unlike the Creoles they made no attempt to create dishes they had in Europe. " Cajun cuisine is a 'table in the wilderness,' a creative adaptation of indigenous Louisiana foods.

It is a cuisine forged out of a land that opened its arms to a wary traveler. "

(Folse, 2) The Cajuns lived off the land and used what natural resources they had in order to survive. They lived in the bayou where fish, shellfish, and wild game were plentiful. The Cajuns did not try to replicate European dishes since they did not have access to the exotic spices and other hard to find ingredients that made up the more complex European dishes. The Cajuns were simple, hard working, lower class people living off the land.

The Creoles were European aristocrats who traveled to New Orleans in the 1690s for the opportunity to establish communities and traditions in the New World. The Creole people were the upper class of Louisiana. " The word Creole persisted as a term also referring to white Louisianans, usually of upper-class, non-Cajun origin. " (Encyclopedia of Cajun Culture, 1) Creole, Cajun interaction was looked down upon. When a Creole married a Cajun the upper class Creole was looked down at and considered a Cajun. The food they prepared had a direct correlation with the food they ate in Europe.

With their complex, multi course meals; " French, Spanish, German and Italian cooking are readily apparent in Creole cuisine. " (Folse, 1) However, the Spanish influenced the taste of the food with their spices. The Creole food represents Louisiana's flair and imagination. Cajun food was shaped by where they settled. They adapted to the land and used what was around to create such dishes as " Jambalaya, grillades, stews, fricassees, soups and fumbos. "(Folse, 2) Cajun cooking was simple and could be created all in one pot.

The Cajuns are known for their different types of sausages. They used what they had to create their meals. They had an abundance of Wild game, seafood, wild vegetables and herbs in order to make their dishes. The Cajuns were simple people who enjoyed living off the land. Creole cuisine is that of artistry and talent, developed and made possible by the nations and cultures who settled in and around New Orleans. Unlike the Cajuns, the Creole people were the upper class and felt they needed to recreate European dishes in order to be happy.

They were able to afford rare spices and other foods from Europe that were not readily found in Louisiana. Creole food is always full-flavored, with generous components of butter, pepper, salt and herbs. The combination of onions, bell peppers and celery, cooked in a roux of oil and flour, is the starting point for a tremendous number of Creole dishes - although Creole tastes can emerge when none of those ingredients are present. (Folse, 1)

Creole and Cajun cooking developed in Southern Louisiana.

Basically Creole cooking is city style and Cajun is rural. They both use many of the same locally grown ingredients. Creole refers to a native development from the French and Spanish colonial period. At one time anything grown locally was termed " Creole", so you could buy Creole eggs, Creole cream cheese, Creole beef, etc. Today the area's best tomatoes are Creoles. Both styles have been influenced by Indians, French, African Americans and Spanish. Both styles use fresh local food but the preparation is different. Creole cooking is more elegant.

Fish and rice and a sauce might be used but in Creole dishes the sauce would be more delicate and the ingredients served separately. In Cajun cooking it would be more likely to put all the ingredients in one pot and serve it as a one dish meal. Cajun cooking is known for its spiciness. Cajun and Creole cultures are quite distinct and so are their cuisines. The Creoles were the European born aristocrats, wooed by the Spanish to establish New Orleans in the 1690's. The influence of classical and regional French, Spanish, German and Italian cooking are readily apparent in Creole cuisine.