

# Mariner's Menu

SEAFOOD INFORMATION FROM UNC SEA GRANT

## Seafood Plus A Dash of Spice

When we completed the work for our last *Mariner's Menu* on Southern seafood cookery, Creole and Cajun dishes seemed a natural follow-up.

Cajun influence in the kitchen reflects French country-cooking skills. Creole food was influenced by the French, Spanish and Portuguese roots of people of European descent born in the New World. In cooking, Creole is often used to describe concoctions of tomatoes, green pepper, garlic and onions. It is also descriptive of some Caribbean islands cuisine.

Most people seem to use the terms Cajun and Creole interchangeably. We're using both here. Always associated with Louisiana, Cajun and Creole were also enhanced by Native Americans and African-Americans.

The names of Creole and Cajun recipes often come from word meanings in the language. Jambalaya is from the French word meaning "ham" and the African word for "rice," connected by the Acadian "a la." Gumbo, a Cajun soup, comes from the African word for "okra." If it doesn't contain okra, it's not gumbo. (There's also a great gumbo recipe in our *Mariner's Menu* on catfish. Try it in addition to this issue's recipes.)

The recipe for Louisiana Crab Cakes has quite a few ingredients and several steps. We at first wondered if it was worth the trouble. It is. I suggest making the seasoned crumbs and seasoning mix ahead of time. Store in tightly closed containers in the freezer. You may want to use the crumbs and seasoning in other foods, also.

We realize that some people like their foods

really hot, while others prefer a milder version. These recipes are in between. As with any food preparation, always adjust seasonings to your tastes.

On our scale of 1-5 (5=excellent, 1=poor), these recipes received average evaluations of 4.5 or higher.

### Questions and Answers

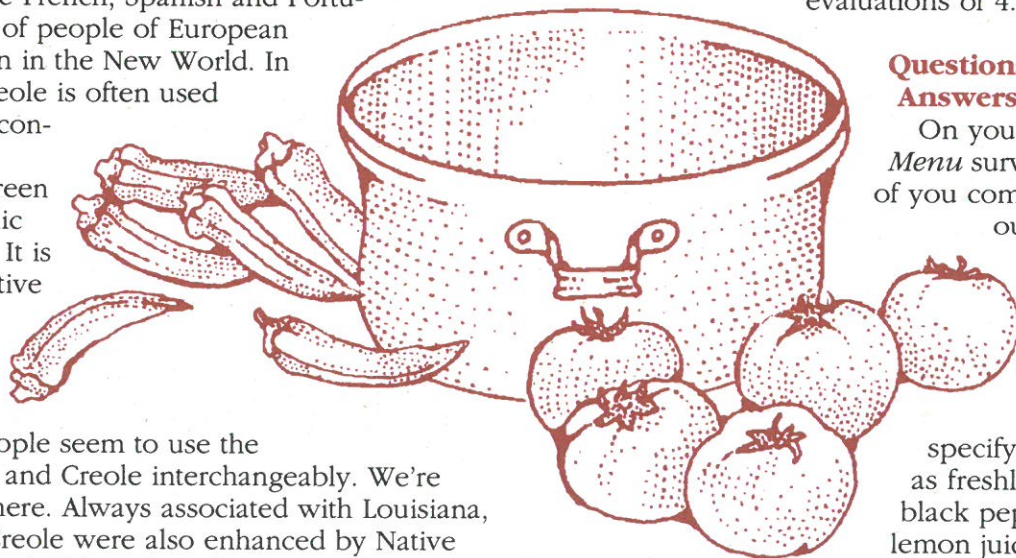
On your *Mariner's Menu* survey, several of you commented on our use of fresh ingredients. You'll notice that we always specify such items as freshly ground black pepper, fresh lemon juice and fresh crumbs.

And we almost never use a processed food such as soup. Instead, we make a sauce from scratch. It's superior to a canned product.

I suggest that you always begin with fresh, top quality ingredients. Then if you want to substitute another time, try it. You'll notice that the fresh ingredients do make a difference.

### The Taste and Test Panel

Seafood Lab health, food and nutrition leaders who participated in this work are Dollie Bell, Judy Blessing, Vera Gaskins, Martha Giles, Kay Holm, Anne Lawton, Lissie McNamee, Betty Motes, Mary Dudley Price, Valaree Stanley, Beulah Toll and Dot Whitley.





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## Louisiana Crab Cakes

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1 pound backfin crab meat  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
1/3 cup fresh French bread crumbs  
1 egg  
2 tablespoons diced green pepper  
2 tablespoons diced green onion  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 1/2 teaspoons Tabasco sauce  
1 teaspoon Creole Seasoning  
1/4 cup margarine

### Seasoned Bread Crumbs

1 1/2 cups fresh French bread crumbs  
6 tablespoons freshly grated Romano cheese  
1 1/2 teaspoons dried basil  
1 1/2 teaspoons oregano  
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/2 teaspoon onion powder  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt

### Creole Seasoning

1 teaspoon salt  
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
3/4 teaspoon paprika  
1/4 teaspoon onion powder  
1/16 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/16 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/16 teaspoon dried oregano

Mix all ingredients. Store in glass jar.

### Creole Sauce

1/4 cup prepared horseradish  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 tablespoons minced green onion  
2 tablespoons minced celery  
2 tablespoons minced green pepper  
1 teaspoon pressed garlic  
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1/8 teaspoon Tabasco sauce  
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper

Prepare Seasoned Bread Crumbs, Creole Seasoning and Creole Sauce. (Crumbs and seasoning may be made ahead. Store seasoning in tightly closed jar and keep in freezer for later use.) Set sauce aside and keep warm while preparing crab cakes.

Remove any shell fragments from crab meat. In large bowl, mix mayonnaise, crumbs, egg, pepper, onion, Worcestershire, Tabasco and Creole Seasoning. Gently mix in crab meat. Form into 1 1/2-inch balls.

Roll in Seasoned Bread Crumbs. Flatten into 1/2-inch thick cakes.

Melt margarine in large heavy skillet over medium heat. Cook crab cakes until golden brown on one side, about 2 to 3 minutes. Turn and repeat on other side. Drain on paper towels. Spoon Creole Sauce onto plates. Place two crab cakes on each. Makes 18 to 20 crab cakes.

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## Spicy Seafood Gumbo

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3/4 pound medium shrimp, peeled  
1/2 pint standard oysters, undrained  
1/4 pound backfin crab meat  
1/2 pound skinless fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
1/4 cup flour  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup chopped celery  
2 teaspoons pressed garlic  
1 1/4 1/2-ounce can chicken broth  
1 1/4 1/2-ounce can tomatoes, undrained, chopped  
1 10-ounce package frozen cut okra  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
3/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce  
1 bay leaf  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/4 teaspoon dried basil  
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 10-ounce package frozen cut okra  
cooked rice (optional)

Heat oil in large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add flour and cook until roux is copper colored, about 15 to 20 minutes. Add onions, celery and garlic and cook about 5 minutes. Add broth, tomatoes, Worcestershire, Tabasco, bay leaf, parsley, thyme, basil, oregano, pepper and salt. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Add okra. Simmer 25 minutes. Add fish, shrimp and oysters. Simmer about 10 minutes. Add crab meat and continue simmering until fish, shrimp and oysters are done, about 5 more minutes. Serve over rice, if desired. Serves 6 to 8.

*Note: If you prefer gumbo less brown or without a roux, omit flour. Sauté vegetables lightly in oil, then continue recipe as directed.*

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## Crab Savannah

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1 pound backfin crab meat  
2 cups toasted white bread crumbs  
5 tablespoons margarine, melted  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
1/8 teaspoon Tabasco sauce  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup light cream  
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs



Mix crab meat with toasted bread crumbs. Combine 4 tablespoons of margarine, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper in medium bowl. Add crab meat and mix gently. Add enough cream to make a soft mixture. Turn into lightly greased 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. Combine dry bread crumbs and remaining 1 tablespoon margarine. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes or until bubbly and lightly browned. Serves 6.

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### **Pontchartrain Jambalaya**

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**1 pound medium shrimp, peeled**  
**1 pint standard oysters, drained**  
**1 tablespoon margarine**  
**1 1/2 cups chopped onions**  
**1/2 pound highly seasoned sausages, cut into bite size pieces**  
**1 tablespoon flour**  
**1/2 pound country ham, diced**  
**1 14 1/2-ounce can tomatoes, undrained, chopped**  
**1 cup uncooked rice**  
**1 teaspoon pressed garlic**  
**1 14 1/2-ounce can chicken broth**  
**1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper**  
**1/2 teaspoon dried thyme**  
**1/2 cup chopped green pepper**  
**3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**

Melt margarine in heavy pot over medium heat. Add onions and sausages and cook until sausages are brown and onions are translucent. Stir in flour and cook slowly, stirring constantly, until the roux has turned the color of peanut butter. Add ham and tomatoes and cover tightly. Simmer for about 30 minutes. Add rice, garlic, broth, red pepper, thyme, green pepper and parsley. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes or until rice is done but not mushy; do not stir. Stir in shrimp and bring back to boil. Stir in oysters and cook until desired doneness, about 8 to 10 minutes. Serves about 10.

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### **Creole Bouillabaisse**

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**3/4 pound medium shrimp, peeled**  
**1 pint standard oysters, undrained**  
**1 pound backfin crab meat**  
**1 pound skinless snapper fillets**  
**1 pound skinless grouper fillets**  
**2 tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**2 tablespoons olive oil**  
**1/4 cup flour**  
**1 cup chopped onion**  
**1/2 cup chopped celery**  
**1 teaspoon pressed garlic**  
**5 cups water**  
**1/4 cup dry white wine**  
**1 14 1/2-ounce can tomatoes, undrained, chopped**  
**2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**  
**1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**2 teaspoons salt**  
**1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper**

Cut fish into serving size portions. In large pot or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Blend in flour. Cook, stirring constantly, until light brown. Add onion, celery and garlic and cook until tender. Gradually stir in water. Add wine, tomatoes, parsley, lemon juice, bay leaf, salt and cayenne. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Add fish and simmer 3 to 5 minutes. Add shrimp, oysters and crab meat and simmer until shrimp and oysters are done, about 5 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

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### **Cajun Shrimp**

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**1 1/2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled**  
**1/4 cup vegetable oil**  
**1/4 cup chopped green onion**  
**1/4 teaspoon pressed garlic**  
**1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper**  
**1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper**  
**1/8 teaspoon dried thyme**  
**1/8 teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled**  
**1/16 teaspoon dried oregano**  
**skewers**

In large bowl, combine oil, green onion, garlic, cayenne, black pepper, salt, red pepper, thyme, rosemary and oregano. Add shrimp and stir well. Refrigerate 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

Remove shrimp and thread on skewers. Grill or broil about 4 inches from heat source until pink, about 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Serves 6.

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### **Court Bouillon of Red Snapper**

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**2 pounds skinless snapper fillets**  
**1/2 cup vegetable oil**  
**1/4 cup flour**  
**1 1/2 cups sliced onions**  
**1 14 1/2-ounce can tomatoes, undrained, chopped**  
**2 bay leaves**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1/3 cup chopped green pepper**  
**1/2 cup sliced green onions**  
**1 teaspoon pressed garlic**  
**2 cups white wine**  
**1 cup water**  
**2 lemon slices**  
**1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley**  
**2 tablespoon Tabasco sauce**

Cut fillets into serving size portions. In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add flour. Cook, stirring constantly, until lightly browned. Add onions and tomatoes and cook 5 minutes. Add bay leaves, salt, green pepper, green onions, garlic, wine, water, lemon, parsley and Tabasco. Cook 20 to 30 minutes. Add fish and simmer until fish is done, about 15 minutes. Serves 8.

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## Shrimp Creole

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1 1/2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
8 slices bacon  
1 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup chopped celery  
1/2 cup chopped green pepper  
1 tablespoon flour  
1 28-ounce can tomatoes, undrained, chopped  
1 8-ounce can tomato juice  
1 1/4 cups chicken broth  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 bay leaf  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
cooked rice

Fry bacon over medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Crumble and set aside. Discard all but 1 tablespoon of bacon fat.

Place bacon fat in large saucepan over medium heat. Sauté onions, celery and pepper until soft. Add flour and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, juice, broth, salt, bay leaf, cayenne and black pepper. Bring to boil and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, or until sauce is desired consistency. Add shrimp and simmer, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the shrimp are done. Discard bay leaf. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with bacon. Serves 6.

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## Creole Sautéed Mahi-Mahi

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2 medium mahi-mahi fillets (about 1 1/2 pounds)  
2 1/2 tablespoons minced green onion  
8 tablespoons margarine

### Creole Seasoning

1 teaspoon pressed garlic  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 1/2 tablespoons paprika  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon dried basil

Combine ingredients for seasoning mix. Sprinkle over fillets. Sprinkle with green onion.

Melt margarine and heat in large skillet over medium heat. Place fillets in pan, seasoning side up, and sauté until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Turn and repeat on other side. Cook until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serve seasoning side up. Serves 4 to 6.

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