

I was in New Orleans again recently, this time going down there with a group from church to work on some houses that had been flooded. It was so very sad to see so many homes still unoccupied, neighborhoods silent of the laughter of children, stores unopened and some school and churches still empty. It will be years before any sense of normalcy returns, yet I am always struck by the graciousness and resiliency of the people down there. Despite their losses, they are kind and welcoming to those who come to their aid and to friends and family who share their homes with them. It gives one hope that life will go on.

As before, I enjoyed some wonderful Southern cooking once the hammer and crowbar were put away for the day. Twice we took off for the French Quarter where here and there restaurants had reopened. I had some steamed crawfish served with a fiery hot sauce and fried catfish nuggets that were quite tasty served with a homemade tartar sauce. Simple side dishes of creamed spinach, okra, collards, and fried tomatoes are quite common everywhere you go. New Orleans food tickles my taste buds like no other food does. Most dishes are so very simple to make and don't cost much for ingredients. Following are recipes for crawfish, fried catfish and that great creamed spinach that I'm sure you will enjoy.

Crawfish and Rice

3 medium crawfish (uncooked) cut into small pieces
2 Tb. oil
1/2 small onion, chopped

The Sailaway Gourmet



by Cathy Smith

1/8 tsp. thyme
2 Tb. tomato paste
3 cups water
1-1/2 cups rice
1-2 tsp. of any spicy seasoning
(McCormick's makes a Spicy Seasoning Mix)

Heat the oil in a saucepan and sauté crawfish, onion and thyme for 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and water and bring to a boil. Add rice and seasoning and cook covered, for 1 hour or until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender. Serves 4-6.

Deep Fried Catfish Nuggets

3 to 4 catfish fillets
Yellow Corn Meal
2 teaspoons of Seasoned Salt (Lawry's)
or any type of New Orleans Seasoning

Rinse the catfish fillets and pat dry with a paper towel. Cut into bite sized nuggets. Combine the corn meal and seasoning of your choice in a plas-

tic bag. Place the nuggets into the bag and shake to coat them completely. Heat oil to 325° in a deep fryer or deep frying pan. Drop the catfish nuggets into the oil and fry until they turn golden brown. Drain on a paper towel and serve with tartar sauce or a good horseradish sauce. Serve with some steamed collard greens.

My Favorite Creamed Spinach

1 small diced onion
Fresh minced garlic to taste
1-10oz. can of cream of celery soup
1 Tb. Flour
4 Tb. Butter
Salt and Pepper to taste
20 oz. frozen chopped spinach, cooked and drained using paper towels to pat out water

Fry onion and garlic until onions are clear and soft, stirring often so as not to burn the garlic. In a saucepan, on medium heat, stir together with wire whisk the soup, flour, butter, salt and pepper until smooth and piping hot. Combine with spinach and onion mixture and serve.

If you can spare some time to build or to help in any way those survivors on our Gulf Coast, please do so. They will need the citizens of our country to continue to come to their aid for a long time.

Thank you and have a great month – behave yourselves on April Fool's Day!

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BAKED SHRIMP CREOLE

2 eggs, slightly beaten
2c Shrimp
Oil

Pepper & salt to taste
1/4c Water
2c Cornflake crumbs

1. Beat eggs slightly with water. 2. Dry shrimp on paper towels; dip first into crumbs, then eggs, then into crumbs again. 3. Place shrimp in well-oiled shallow baking pan so they do not touch; sprinkle with salt and pepper. 4. Turn once with a broad spatula so that both sides are oiled. 5. Bake in preheated 450°F. oven 6 to 8 minutes. Serve with Shrimp Sauce or your favorite sauce.

Shrimp Sauce:
1 c Chili sauce
1/4 c Pickle relish
1/2 tsp. Mustard, prepared

1 Tb. Lemon juice
1 c Mayonnaise
1 Hard-boiled Egg, chopped
1/2 tsp. Onion, grated

1. Combine all ingredients; chill. 2. Serve with baked or broiled shrimp.