

Shabazz's Southern Home Cooking - New Menu, New Meaning

By Patricia Smith-Deering
Phoenix Managing Editor

Southern cooking among Blacks is noted for its heavy reliance on fatty and salty pork seasoning. Vegetables, especially greens and beans, aren't "smokin'" unless that traditional flavor is there, many of us feel. Over the centuries, our taste buds and our sensibilities have become accustomed to foods and seasonings that are known contributors to conditions like high blood pressure that particularly plague Black people.

Shabazz's Southern Home Cooking, located at the corner of Fourth Street and Patterson Avenue, hopes to change all that. Ironically, the previous Southern Home Cooking restaurant at that same location specialized in what is considered traditional, Southern cooking.

"Our people are being re-educated about Southern home cooking," explained Basir Razzak, manager of the newly-reopened restaurant and follower of the Nation of Islam. He continued, "We're taking the grease and the poison out...The food is kosher, healthy, and life-giving."

The name "Shabazz" is sig-

nificant. Razzak said, "Shabazz is the root name of us (American Blacks). We have been witness that we are survivors...God revealed to us, the original Black Man of America, who we really are. Shabazz is who we really are, the Tribe here in America. We are descendants." He added that the name literally means "that which cannot be destroyed or conquered."

Before Razzak's conversion to the Nation of Islam and its beliefs, he was Lorenzo Pearson, Winston-Salem native, Carver High School graduate (Class of '67), and alumnus of NC A&T (Class of '71). As manager of the restaurant, he also does all of the cooking for now. His experience started in his own mother's kitchen.

As he is doing with others, Razzak was re-educated. "The restaurant represents the new way of life, of eating," he said, "and preparing food that is healthy."

The menu features most of the basic meats with the exception of pork or pork by-products. "Pork has been forbidden to man and mankind from the origination of the hog," Razaak explained, adding that it was "made for medical purposes, not human consumption." Vege-

tables such as spinach, brown rice, navy beans, green beans, and sweet peas are also on the menu with the focus on those that are easy to digest. "We have white potatoes, also," he added, "but we use them sparingly."

Other items include baked turkey and baked chicken. Fried chicken is available upon request, according to Razzak, but he does not recommend

fried foods of any kind. Fresh fish is available every day, said Razzak, which for now means trout and salmon. However, whiting will soon be added to the menu. He uses corn oil and butter in his cooking. One of his creative and healthful touches for brown rice is to add fresh coconut milk to it. "We are about the business of re-educating our people to what Southern home cooking is all about."

Razzak sees the restaurant as a means of not only re-educating Black people in terms of their real identity but also as "an example of the good things our people do." He said: "The work of a people manifests who they are. When we say one thing and do another, that's hypocritical."

Shabazz's Southern Home Cooking opened officially January 1 this year. It operates seven days a week, Monday-Saturday from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m.-8 p.m. Breakfast offers a particularly tasty treat with all-beef or all-turkey sausages. Razzak said, "That's to replace the taste people have in their mouth for pork sausage."



Basir Razzak



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