

COOKIN' GOOD

**By James Louras
Creole Gumbo**

It doesn't have to be Mardi Gras time to enjoy this delicious Creole gumbo, though when you're eating it, you'll feel as though you are in New Orleans. The aroma is incredible and the flavor tantalizing. To serve six, you'll need:

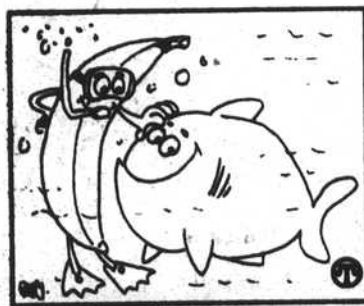
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 lb. okra, fresh or frozen, sliced
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 large green pepper, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 scallions, finely minced
- 1 celery rib, chopped finely
- 1 16-oz. can whole tomatoes
- 1 8-oz. can tomato paste
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp. thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 lb. shrimp, peeled, deveined and washed thoroughly
- 1/2 cup water

Refrigerate shrimp until ready to use. Heat two tablespoons of the oil in a pan large enough to hold the okra. Sauté the okra for seven minutes. Set aside. In a large pot, mix the remaining oil, add the flour and stir over medium heat for five minutes. Add the vegetables, canned tomatoes, tomato paste, garlic and other seasonings. Stir well, and sauté for five minutes. Add the water slowly until well blended, stirring constantly. Add the okra. Cook over low flame for 45 minutes. Add the shrimp, cook an additional five minutes. Do not overcook the shrimp. Remove the bay leaf before serving. Serve over fluffy white rice, or saffron-flavored pilaf.

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COOKING CORNER

Sautéed Sole Tobago With Bananas, Pecans and Lime
Bananas, America's favorite fruit can be used in many deliciously daring main dishes. Here's one reminiscent of early days in the faraway islands that teams bananas with fish.



Sautéed Sole Tobago With Bananas, Pecans and Lime

- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 8 fillets of sole or flounder
- Flour for dredging
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 cups diagonally sliced bananas (1/3 inch slices)
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 1/3 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 cup dry white wine or light stock
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh herb (mint, parsley, coriander, basil or tarragon)

Preheat oil in heavy sauté pan over medium-high heat. Dredge fish fillets lightly in flour. Sauté until golden brown, about 3 minutes each side. Remove to warm platter. Pour off excess oil and wipe down sauté pan. Place pan back on stove over high heat; add butter. When foamy and just starting to brown, add bananas and pecans. Toss and cook for 1 minute. Add lime juice and wine. Cook for another 3 minutes. Add fresh herbs. Pour sauce and bananas over fish. Garnish with additional banana slices and lime wedges.

Yield: 4 servings

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