



KEVIN BELTON'S BIG FLAVORS OF NEW ORLEANS

WITH RHONDA K. FINDLEY

KEVIN
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NEW ORLEANS BANANAS FOSTER

*I love this dessert because it's almost like a breakfast dessert. The warm sauce and ice cream are a perfect finish to a long brunch with family. At jazz brunch, in particular, it's not uncommon for the musicians to stroll around. Equally as common is Bananas Foster made tableside. The whole dish, including the tableside preparation, is a culinary flourish à la New Orleans. We have Ms. Ella Brennan and the Brennan family to thank for creating this landmark New Orleans dish. **Serves 6***

1/2 cup butter	1 teaspoon cinnamon	1 cup dark rum
1/2 cup brown sugar	4 ripe bananas, peeled and sliced on the bias	3 ounces banana liqueur
2 teaspoons vanilla		Vanilla ice cream

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter and add brown sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon. Stir with a wooden spoon. Add bananas and cook until caramelized over medium-high heat, about 3 minutes.

Remove pan from heat and add rum and liqueur. With a long lighter, ignite and let flame cook out the alcohol. Flame will die out when alcohol has evaporated.

Spoon hot banana mixture over individual servings of vanilla ice cream and serve immediately.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

Add chopped pecans, about 1/2 cup, to the butter and brown sugar sauté to add a bit of a nutty flavor. Leftover sauce is great over pancakes the next day.





SHRIMP CREOLE

*This Creole recipe is a wonderful showcase for our beautiful, locally grown namesake tomatoes. Pair with local poultry or shrimp to create one of New Orleans' signature dishes. Shrimp Creole was originally inspired by the indigenous produce and the influences of the New Orleans cultures that contributed to the birth of this amazing dish. **Serves 4 to 6***

1/2 cup butter

1 1/2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped green bell pepper

3/4 cup chopped celery

8 cloves garlic, chopped

2 teaspoons salt

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

5 tablespoons Creole seasoning, divided

2 bay leaves

32 ounces fresh tomatoes, peeled and seeded, chopped

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

2 teaspoons hot sauce

4 tablespoons water

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 pounds 16/20 shrimp uncooked, headless, peeled, and deveined

4 1/2 cups cooked white rice

1/3 cup chopped green onions

1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Cook onions until translucent, about 4 minutes, add bell pepper and celery and cook another 3 minutes or until softened. Add garlic and continue to cook until you smell garlic, about 1 minute. Add salt, cayenne, 2 tablespoons Creole seasoning, bay leaves, tomatoes, Worcestershire, and hot sauce. Stir thoroughly and heat to a boil.

Thoroughly combine water with flour, being careful there are not lumps or clumps. Stir into mixture until completely combined and you feel the mixture thickening. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes.

Season shrimp with remaining seasoning, add to the pan, stir in thoroughly, and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat, cover, and cook until shrimp are pink, about 5 minutes.

Serve over steaming hot rice and garnish with green onion and parsley.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

You can add chicken or sausage or even vegetables to create distinctive Creole combinations. I really recommend going as fresh as possible with your ingredients but don't shy away if you have to use canned tomatoes. If you have to go that route, I suggest purchasing very high quality products.

FRIED OYSTERS AND SPINACH SALAD WITH FRESH PONCHATOU LA STRAWBERRIES

I remember the first time I saw Mom batter oysters in cornmeal. Once she fried them, I just couldn't believe how something so soggy and soft became so crispy on the outside and so tender and juicy in the middle. There is nothing that matches that flavor to this day. Serves 4 to 6

FRIED OYSTERS

Vegetable oil

2 cups finely ground cornmeal

2 tablespoons Creole seasoning

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly cracked pepper

1 large egg

1/2 cup milk

24 freshly shucked oysters

HERBSAINT DRESSING

1 cup Herbsaint liqueur

3 tablespoons finely diced shallots

2 tablespoons champagne vinegar

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup buttermilk

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon

SALAD

1/2 pound thick-cut bacon, cubed

1 pound baby spinach

1 pint Louisiana strawberries, sliced and drained

1 small red onion, thinly sliced

FRIED OYSTERS

Heat deep fryer and oil to 375 degrees.

In a medium bowl, combine cornmeal, Creole seasoning, salt, and pepper. In a separate bowl, whisk egg and milk and season with salt and pepper.

Dip oysters in egg wash. Roll in cornmeal. Dip in egg wash. Right before frying, dip in cornmeal again and immediately place in fryer. Fry until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Drain on paper towel and serve immediately.

HERBSAINT DRESSING

In a small saucepan over medium heat, reduce Herbsaint for 10 minutes or until it reduces to 2 tablespoons. Remove from heat.

In a medium bowl, whisk shallots with vinegar. Let rest for 10 minutes. Whisk in mayonnaise, buttermilk, cream, tarragon, and Herbsaint reduction. Add salt, if necessary. Splash in additional Herbsaint from the bottle to add a bit more punch to dressing.

SALAD

In a sauté pan over medium-high heat, cook bacon until crispy. Drain and set aside.

Arrange spinach on each serving plate. Sprinkle with strawberry slices, red onion, and bacon.

Drizzle with dressing and top with warm fried oysters.

TIP & SUGGESTIONS

Why mess with perfection?

