

*Chez  
Nous*  
en Louisiane



Cultural Creations

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# The Life Of A Beignet

Story and Photos by: Delaney Ligori

Graphics by: Hannah Robert

**From its origination in Ancient Rome and Canada, to its iconic status in New Orleans, beignets have had a major effect on Louisiana and its culture. The city of New Orleans has been infamous for beignets as it is a sweet powdered pastry enjoyed for breakfast, a snack, or dessert. This traditional dish is known as the donut without the hole, and it is constantly evolving with New Orleans' lifestyle.**

A beignet is made from a choux pastry dough, which is a delicate French pastry dough made with eggs, water or milk, butter, and flour. The pastry consists of yeasted, sweetened dough that rises, is cut into squares, fried, and doused in powdered sugar. The dough squares become light, airy, fluffy pastries that are served hot in three. The word beignet is traced back to the Celtic language, related to the word "bigne," meaning "to raise." In French, the word "beignet" translates to "fritter or doughnut."



The origin of Louisiana's staple dessert, beignets, derived from the 17th-century French settlers forced to migrate from Acadia, Canada to Louisiana, fostering the future "Cajuns" of the South. Before the Acadian migration to Louisiana, thousands of French citizens were forced away from their homeland during the Reign of Terror, a period during the French Revolution, to escape political tensions, state-sanctioned violence, and public executions. Louisiana became a place of refuge to many Acadian French people because they believed that France still had power over the territory.

Unexpectedly, the Spanish government was already under control in 1762 and offered lowland areas to the French along the Mississippi River to prevent British expansion

to the east. According to The National Park Service, the French settled in the South-Central regions of Louisiana and became known as the Cajuns. The settlers survived by hunting and cultivating produce, living off the Mississippi River Delta. In 2021, nearly 28,000 Cajuns live in Louisiana, bringing in talents of taste and culture.

## Cafe Du Monde, The Original Coffee Stand

The first beignet shop to open in 1862 in New Orleans, Louisiana was Cafe Du Monde, serving three classic powdered beignets with a cafe au lait, a coffee mixed half and half with hot milk. The stand is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, only closed on Christmas day. Located on Decatur Street, New Orleans in the French Market, it has become a landmark and a must-see for visitors and locals of Louisiana, as it is a famous traditional cuisine of the city.

According to What's Cooking America, the local legend spread around New Orleans, Louisiana, that "Cafe Du Monde's beignet recipe was brought from France by the Ursuline Nuns", however, this has not been confirmed, so it remains a fable of the city.

Cafe Du Monde owner, Jay Roman, expressed keeping things the original way. This dedication dates back for 158 years, maintaining the original French recipe with generations of positive feedback. Roman agrees with carrying on Louisiana's Cajun history through people and his famous dessert. "Our beignets are what make people spread the word about French influence, beignets are a staple of the city and culture. New Orleans is all about

serious about customers' experience, relaxation, wine, and beignets because our motto is about enjoying life together," said Stolberg.

For The Vintage Restaurant, it has been five strong years of new beignet fillings, flavors, and wine. Local Pharell Dean says, "We love coming here. It is so fresh and new. As locals, we adore the movement of Magazine Street."

**"The cafe is so chic. The bubbly drinks we ordered go perfect with beignets. The cinnamon-sugar topping is so delicious. The menu is so fun and different. I love trying their new combinations," said Dean.**

This dish, however, is not only adored by locals but also by professional cooks with years of experience.

## Professional Chef Outlook

Professional culinary artists have guided the industry of beignets by teaching and breaking down the origin in their lessons. Chef Tammy Rink, Pastry Instructor at Nicholls State John Folse Culinary Institute, impacts students in the French/Cajun culture by informing them on the history and each step of the dough making process. The educational course begins with Introduction to Baking, teaching culinary students the beginning process of yeasted doughs and making small cream puffs and bread. The Chef concludes the class with Southern Baking and the history of foods from the region.

Rink noted that she has been eating beignets since she was a little kid, as it is forever nostalgic in her memories. "I teach about history because I want to pass this down through generations like it was to me. Louisiana is an important addition to the world and it needs to be understood how much of an impact our foods have on other's lives."

"We teach students about the importance of our history, so they can migrate and share Louisiana's rich culture. Beignets are a staple of Cajun cuisine, it is unforgettable and part of our life, it would be weird if it were to disappear," remarked Rink.

## The Beignet Festival

Keeping the tradition alive is important to New Orleans. Five years ago, the Beignet Festival became recognized as the 133rd festival in Louisiana. This is now an annual event hosted by the Tres Doux Foundation on the Festival Grounds in New Orleans City Park, changing the beignet game first hand.

This festival showcases diverse forms of beignets, from the classic powdered pastry to stuffed with fruit, seafood, cheese, and more. This event was inspired and created to raise awareness and funds for autism programs in New Orleans, combining recognition of mental health with delicious treats.

With more than 30 vendors at the festival and growing through the years, Sherwood Collins, founder of the Beignet Festival, mentioned how nice it was to gather everyone around for a good cause. "We created this event to support our child who has developmental issues and figured a great way to raise money for New Orleans learning facilities is to host a Beignet Festival." The mission of Tres Doux Foundation is to "celebrate, embrace and enhance the lives of children with developmental delays and disabilities by presenting them as whole beings, and to support organizations that do the same". The festival is held during October as an all-day event with live music and restaurant vendors bringing company all day. To finish the day, the crowds are given the chance to vote on the best sweet, best savory, crowd favorite, and most original beignet.

## The Future of Beignets

The future of beignets will remain strong and legendary throughout Louisiana's history. The Acadians sought refuge for injustice and founded a fluffy haven in beignets. This delicious, French-inspired pastry everyone knows and loves will continue to lure in more curiosity and space for diversity within Louisiana. These techniques and recipes will forever affect the people and visitors who travel to learn about Louisiana's history. Beignets' origin will always be traced back to Ancient Europe but will continue developing as a Cajun dish in Louisiana for the rest of time.

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# Restaurants Rejoice! Crawfish Season is Here!

Story by: Shannon Royal

Graphics by Ethan Johnson



Top left picture: beignets with powdered sugar and cinnamon sugar toppings at The Vintage Restaurant

Top right picture: Customers ordering at The Vintage Restaurant

Bottom Picture: The Vintage Restaurant, a new type of beignet, founded in 2018

Photo credits: Delaney Ligori

The Crawfish originates from the Southern Mississippi River and is found throughout all of Louisiana. This little mud bug has become a staple in Louisiana Cajun culture and can be found cooked and prepared several ways all throughout Louisiana. Thibodaux's local area has a variety of seafood businesses to choose from some of which include; LA 1 Seafood, Crawdaddy's Seafood, Boogadu Seafood, Seafood Outlet, Heads and Tails Catering, Big Boys Seafood, Chenier's Seafood, etc.

Each business has unique flavors, and mixes different seasonings to give their crawfish its own little flair. This is something that's extremely popular in Cajun culture. . Crawfish gives natives in Louisiana a chance to showcase different styles of cooking and flavors each that will send a shock to consumers' tastebuds.

Crawfish is an important and tasty part of Louisiana culture, bringing a tasty meal for natives and tourists alike. But, there is a culture behind crawfish that holds a special place in the hearts of Louisiana natives. there are hundreds of seafood business in the southern Louisiana community, which is a common economic factor in Louisiana.

## Crawfish Builds Relationships and Brings Opportunities

Crawfish is one of the few binding factors that brings together people from all different races and lifestyles. . The unique recipes and presence of crawfish at events is something that motivates relationships in the community and lifelong friends. A simple recreational crawfish boil in the backyard links people together from different avenues that highlights the importance of crawfish in the com-

munity and Cajun culture.

Owner of Heads and Tails Catering Eric Lafont, who is an alum of Nicholls State University, was an employee of Heads and Tails Catering when he was a student at Nicholls State. After he graduated from Nicholls, he bought into the business, and he started growing HTC from that point forward.

Lafont said, "Heads and Tails Catering has been in business for 32 years, and we started off just boiling seafood for small events and family friends. I made contacts with companies that circulated around the oil field and offered to cater events until my clientele grew. I evolved with big business owners who are now way higher up in corporate positions."

Lafont added an emergency response food supplier option to HTC, which emerged from catering small crawfish boils and events when he first started his business. Working with emergency responders was a major issue, which evolved from being a part of Cajun culture featuring the seafood industry in Louisiana

Lafont said, "The reason I picked up emergency response work sparked from working catering jobs for Entergy. We followed Entergy crews from New Orleans because I made contacts with them doing crawfish boils. I have been involved in the emergency response industry for about ten years, which brought me to where I am now doing big sights that consist of 2,000 to 3,000 people serving three meals per day."



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### Harvesting Crawfish/Seafood

Many of the businesses in Thibodaux are focused on crawfish, ranging from those who cater large events, and those that sell boiled or live crawfish to those who wish to perform their own crawfish boil. While these businesses all sell the same product, there's many differences in the way that the food is prepped for the day ahead.

Going out and gathering crawfish to sell to customers includes gathering other types of seafood as well, like shrimp and crabs, because most businesses like to include other types of seafood with their crawfish when they sell special platters. Special platters usually consist of boiled sausage, potatoes, corn, crawfish, shrimp, and crabs.

Owner of Boogadu Seafood, Blake Ordoyne's history behind selling crawfish sparked from him owning a shrimp boat while he was working in the oil field. Before he began selling crawfish and other seafood, he was laid off from a career in the oil field.

Elaborating on the process of gathering live seafood, Ordoyne said, "When going out to get shrimp, we usually go out at night because the shrimp move at night, which happens to be when the tides are moving. When you catch a falling tide, that is the best because that is when the shrimp fall into your net. If you are on a boat, it does not necessarily matter because you can speed up and catch the shrimp. As far as crawfish, you would wake up at 2 a.m. to go get 200 or 300 pounds of cut bait just to load traps all day until you can't feel your fingers."

Juxtaposing between the catering side of selling crawfish and selling a certain number of crawfish each day to the local community separates businesses because the amount of crawfish that is being sold do not compare. Boogadu Seafood team members are able to go out and fish for their seafood and sell it boiled over the counter, while another business like HTC that caters crawfish events has to hire third parties to go out and get their crawfish.

Lafont of HTC said, "When we first started out, we

were going out to get it ourselves because crawfish was not as demanding as it is now back then. We started picking up all these jobs and could not do it on our own, so we had to go hire a couple local fishermen to catch the crawfish for us, then it was so big to where they could not handle it. We started buying crawfish from wholesalers who buy hundreds of thousands of pounds of crawfish and distribute them all over the United States."

### Business Competition in Communities

In Louisiana, the community makes sure that every business is busy for crawfish season, so there is not competition in the industry, but more like an availability concern. One business might run out of



crawfish for the day, but another business might still have 30 pounds left or some of the other seafood that is included in the platter specials. Businesses are not competing against each other because their customers are working together to find the availability of the product that they are looking for.

Owner of Boogadu Seafood Ordoyne said. "We all have our customers, but they cheat on you if you look at it that way. They all go around to different places, which is great because they get to go chase different flavors and support different small businesses. That helps the community grow altogether."

### Weather Effect on Crawfish

According to the LSU Agricultural Center, people in Louisiana eat crawfish in a variety of dishes like gumbo, crawfish etouffee, crawfish stew, crawfish pies, and more. When people in Louisiana make these types of dishes, many prefer to make them in the wintersince the temperature has a large effect



# Chef John Folse Institute's Impact through Cajun and Creole Food

Story by: Brandon Thomas

Photos by: Brandon Thomas



Located in the heart of bayou country Thibodaux, Louisiana sits the John Folse Culinary Institute at Nicholls State University, the only four-year culinary program in the state of Louisiana. Its namesake, Chef John Folse, is an accomplished chef/businessman and is widely accepted as "Louisiana's Culinary Ambassador to the World." He took authentic Cajun and creole dishes international to countries like Japan, France, South Korea, and Russia through his landmark restaurant Lafitte's Landing. Chef Folse opened the Institute in 1994 dedicating it to the preservation of Louisiana's rich Cajun and Creole culinary heritage.

Worldwide Cajun and Creole culture are widely celebrated whether it's the music with Grammy nominated acts like Wayne Toups and Rockin' Dopsie to the day-to-day life popularized in hit television shows like *Swamp People*

and *Duck Dynasty* but what Cajun and Creole culture is most widely known for is the food.

Cajun and creole foods while similar are different. Creole food is based on the many different cultures that occupied south Louisiana, particularly the New Orleans area at the time. From the Africans that were forced into slavery, to the French, and to the Spanish that traded ownership of the Louisiana territory throughout the 17 and 1800s. These cultures mixed over time and created what's now known as Creole cuisine. To find the origins of cajun food you have to travel further west in the state to the Acadian region of Louisiana where French-Canadians migrated down south and used whatever they could hunt, or grow to eat. Cajuns fused Creole and Native American cuisine to make up their unique but different style of

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food. According to NewOrleans.com "Creole food typically uses tomatoes and tomato-based sauces while traditional Cajun food does not."

Popular Cajun and creole food such as jambalaya, gumbo, and crawfish etouffee are culinary staples that take time to cook to ensure that the robust flavors come out, and in a world where food is fast, easy, and accessible. The patience and techniques used to perfect these foods can and are being slowly phased out over time.

Through Chef John Folse, Culinary institute students are taught the basic foundations of traditional cooking infused with Cajun and creole cooking techniques. Later in their studies, they take the recipes and evolve them into dishes with their unique twist.

John Kozar director of the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute said that "students first two years in the institute they learn how to cook but being in south Louisiana they get experience cooking things like gumbo, and beignets during their traditional learning."

Many students come into the classes familiar with the traditional cajun and creole dishes and how to cook them and 83% of the students that attend Nicholls State are residents of Louisiana. Sometimes Louisiana native culinary students have to add to their prior knowledge of cooking Cajun and creole dishes. Chef Kozar said "Some students come in already knowing how to make biscuits. Biscuits are a good southern thing but now we're trying to show you how

Continued on next page.





# 3 Popular Cajun and Creole Foods

THAT ARE FAST AND EASY TO MAKE

1. Jambalaya
2. Gumbo
3. Crawfish Etouffee

83% of students are native residents that use prior knowledge in their cooking to put their own spins on these three dishes.

to make nice flakey biscuits, and there's a way to do that!" On the other hand, some students' prior knowledge of traditional Cajun and creole cooking can be used to their advantage while in the kitchen. Kozar continues "We had a student one time who made his gumbo with the darkest roux (flour and grease) that you could imagine, and we had a chef Marcell Bienvenu who has decades of experience with Cajun and creole food commenting that it would be terrible due to the dark color, but the gumbo was delicious. The student explained there's a secret to having a dark roux that isn't burnt."

Once a student becomes an upperclassman they participate in the institute's BistroRuth restaurant class where the students rotate leadership by developing an individualized menu, preparing specialized dishes, and serving patrons in the restaurant wing of the culinary building. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and time lost due to Hurricane Ida instead of one service a week the students are now tasked with two full services a week. Chef Folse's encyclopedia serves as a textbook for the class. Students are encouraged to create their unique menus that evolve cajun and creole food into modern-day cuisine.

Student Chef Chaz Davis describes the experience of participating in BistroRuth as "a great learning experience. I've learned a lot from Chef Don Kasten and Chef Jana Billiot along with the teacher's assistants who help run BistroRuth."

Chaz Davis is a junior culinary student from Atlanta, Georgia with Louisiana roots. She has used her food education to grow in many ways. "I learned so much from the institute. I was able to make my great-grandma's old tea cookie recipe and use the techniques I learned to make a tropical icing that still fits with the cookie." The institute has produced many notable alumni such as Chef Megan Bickford, the current executive chef at the prestigious Commander Palace in New Orleans. According to Chef Kozar "We have a lot of alumni who have taken their knowl-

Continued on next page.

edge of Cajun and creole skills beyond the borders of Louisiana. We give the students the background of Cajun and creole and they're going to do with it what they will. We have 2 alumni, one currently in Canada with a popular Cajun restaurant and another from Eunice, Louisiana who is now in Houston with a restaurant named Eunice which is very popular."

The John Folse Culinary Institute's ability to maintain and evolve popular Cajun and creole dishes has made JFCI students' prime candidates to work in restaurants in the area. According to louisianacajunbayou.com, there are 19 authentic Cajun and Creole-friendly restaurants that are major tourist attractions. Student Chef Chaz Davis said, "I want to work in an authentic Cajun, creole restaurant whether it's an internship in the Thibodaux area or preferably in New Orleans." Davis continues to say "I've been working outside of the classroom to further my skills I started my own food business Chaz's Comfy Cuisine, and create fun dishes like shrimp and grits, and crawfish etouffee."

The different types of cuisine inside of Cajun and Creole culture are unique ranging from city to city in the state of Louisiana. As previously mentioned, the Acadians of west Louisiana have created an entire way of life-based on Cajun culture while the New Orleanians in the east have thrived off creole, and somewhere in the middle the cultures mix. It's all about preference. Chef Kozar says "I've seen people in Acadia who like their gumbo with only seafood in it while when you travel around some people like things like okra in it you just have to know your audience." Kozar continues "Cajun and Creole culinary culture is starting to become very popular. I'm a native of Pennsylvania and I've started to see boxes of gumbo mix pop up on store shelves but nothing can beat that authentic taste."





# One Cajun Lawyer Against the Queen of England

Story by: Hillary Fischer Edited by: Dominic Lasseigne

Acadiana is the most diverse region in the entire United States. The 22-parish triangle-shaped area starts at Calcasieu Parish, heads to West Baton Rouge, and goes straight up the Mississippi River. 20 miles south of Lafayette sits a small town called Erath. With a population of approximately 2,000 citizens, you wouldn't expect much to come from such a small town. Yet, one man had more stories to tell me than time I had to record them. "Now stick around if you want to hear a story about the time I sued the Queen of England."

Perrin was born and raised in Henry, Louisiana on March 11, 1947. He was the son of two French speaking Louisiana natives, Ella Mae Broussard and Henry Lolly. His father was a World War II veteran who went into the war only knowing French and then learned English along the way. He attended and graduated from Henry High School in 1964, later attending University of Southwestern Louisiana (now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) the following semester. He went on to receive his Juris Doctorate from Louisiana State University Law School.

During his time as an undergraduate, he became the captain of the weightlifting team at ULL.

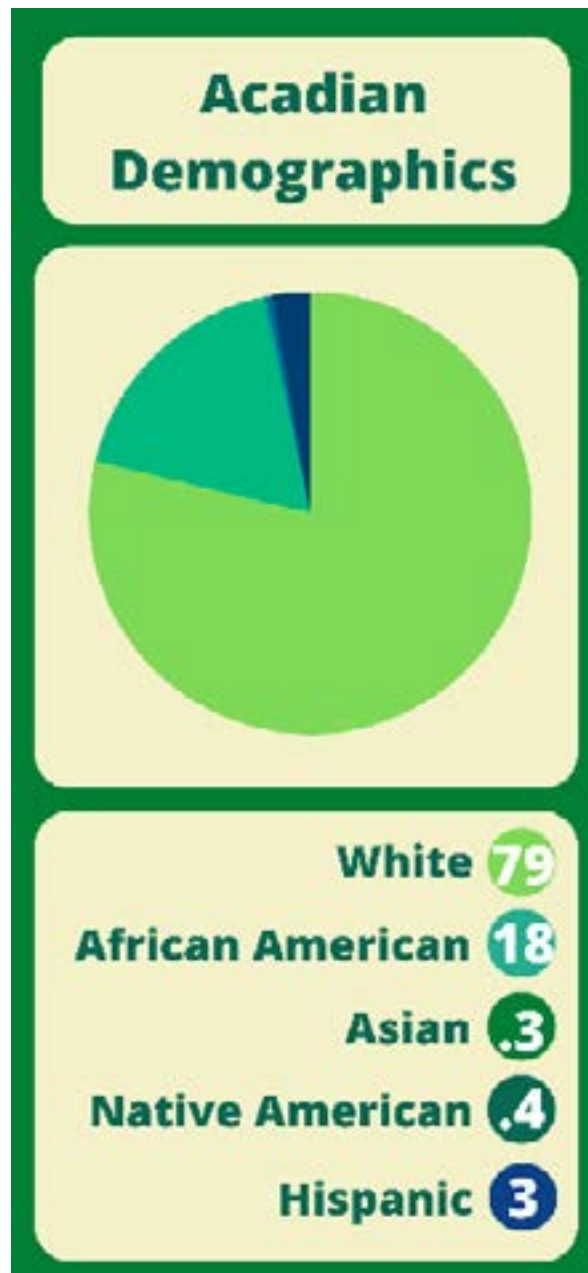
"Our team was so new. We had no coach. We had to discipline ourselves, teach ourselves, practice on our own, but we were good."

While wrestling those three years, the team won eight national championships. Wrestling is where he would eventually meet the man that inspired the biggest decision that he would ever make, Walter.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. They destroyed 19 ships, over 180 aircrafts, and killed over 2,000 Americans. Entering World War II became inevitable for the United States.

In 1942, 4-year-old Walter, his pregnant mother, father, and eight siblings were given 30 days to pack their bags. They boarded trains that deported them to internment camps during the war. This happened to over 100,000 Japanese Americans in the West because the United States feared they were Japanese spies. Walter's family was sent to an unfinished camp in Arkansas that was unable to accommodate for their size. Instead of trying to squeeze everyone into one room, they placed Walter's family in a barn where his mother would give birth to his younger sibling.

When his family was released from the camp, they received a check for \$250. They could go anywhere but home. Their land had been taken, and they had to sell their home for little to nothing. With few options to choose from,



Walter's family decided to move to Baton Rouge where his father started his own garden shop. The hardships of living in an internment camp might have been over, but the problems still followed wherever Walter went. In high school, he was constantly harassed by students who called him slurs like "dirty jap." Perrin described the term as being equally degrading to Japanese Americans as "Coon" is to Caucasians and the N-word is to African Americans. Walter enrolled in Louisiana State University, but left only days later due to harassment. Teachers wouldn't speak to him, and students would bully him with derogatory statements. That's when his father told him, "I heard the Cajuns in Lafayette are nicer. Try to go to school out there." Walter enrolled and joined the weightlifting team at ULL. He became a three-time weightlifting national champion and was the first to win the team title.

Fast-forward to 1988, the United States apologized to every Asian that had been deported. Perrin claimed that Walter was given an apology letter and a \$20,000 dollar check, but Walter never cashed it and has it framed in his office. This act of sincerity led to the formation of a life changing decision for Perrin.

"That's when I started thinking, why don't the Acadians demand an apology. They did the same thing to us. That's what made me start a suit against the Queen in 1990."

The 90's were a time of peace between countries. There were fewer wars and conflicts in the world than ever before. Perrin claimed that the success of his case may have been "a luck of timing." During that decade, countries were looking into their past and acknowledging some of their wrongdoings. After doing much research, Perrin discovered that the British Crown





without trial. We had rights through the Magna Carta. You could not deport women and children just because you thought the father deserved it.”

Perrin said he claimed he was making these arguments in hopes that England would do the right thing. Though, where there is bad, there is also good. Having such a high-profile case came with some good publicity.

Due to his diligence towards his case, five governors named him the head of the Council for Development of French in Louisiana, or CODOFIL. The organization was established in 1968 to preserve and promote French. He served as president for 16 years.

CODOFIL made an agreement with the government that French citizens would only be accepted to work in the United States through CODOFIL if they are serving in the army or doing civic duties. Part of this was that French citizens could complete their civil duties by teaching French in Louisiana classrooms. This was the beginning of French immersion programs in schools.

Unfortunately, since 9/11, there has been an increase in security measures in the United States which makes it harder to be able to get teachers from France to come and teach in Louisiana.

Perrin said, “CODOFIL cannot provide enough French teachers for the number of schools that want to be French immersion.”

There are currently 34 French immersion schools in Louisiana. The most recent addition being North Erath Elementary. He recalled another one of his favorite memories; an invitation to a conference in France. It was set on Normandy Beach near the D-Day graveyard. Each year the conference invites 10-12 lawyers to speak on their case dealing with human rights.

At the conference, he met a reporter from the Economist magazine that wanted to do a feature on him. The article made headlines and became the turning point of his career.

“People started coming from Canada just to help the museum. I was getting reporters sent from New York and Los Angeles to do stories on me. That’s when the museum took off,” said Perrin.

As for the suit, the British Crown reached Perrin, and his party, through their Houston attorney where they offered him \$1 million to settle.

He wasn’t suing for money, but they decided to use the money to start a course on Acadian studies at The University of Louisiana. The university had agreed to the deal, but before he could sign the papers, Perrin said they were requiring him to sign an oath of secrecy. He refused to sign the deal.

“The reason for the petition was to make the world aware of what happened to my ancestors.”

Needing to find a better solution, Perrin reached out to some of his Canadian friends and asked for help. They signed an agreement to work together. The organizations that supported Perrin’s petition were able to get him a 15 minute meeting with Canada’s Prime Minister Jacques Jean Chr ti. He listened to Perrin’s plea and hopped on board. About a year later, Prime Minister Chr ti was able to get the Queen to sign the petition in 2003. It was his last act as Prime Minister of Canada.

Just as Perrin had claimed, he made it happen.

The original copy of the petition is locked away in a museum in Canada, but Perrin holds the only other signed copy in the Acadian Museum in Erath.

Perrin is currently an adjunct law professor at University of Louisiana at Lafayette in sports law and an adjunct professor at Loyola University in legal tactics. He has written over



10 award-winning books with his wife, Mary Perrin. She is currently working on a book about healing traditions of the Acadians and Creoles using prayer and traiteur treatments. She also oversees a healer’s garden in Vermillion Parish. At the garden, they have identified 60 healing plants that date back to the time of Acadian migration to the region. Since the success of the petition, Perrin says that the museum has never been better. They started receiving donations and visitors from all over the world. Although the museum is a small attraction, it is deeply rooted in the years of history that deserve to be told.





# DO YOU WANT CREOLE OR CAJUN?

Story by: Bryce Whittington  
ics by: Daeshawn Armstead

Photos by: Bryce Whittington

Graph-

Every year, millions of tourists flock to Louisiana from all over the world in order to experience the unique culture of the “Pelican State”. The crazy parties, historic atmosphere, astounding wildlife, and loud music are all major parts of what makes Louisiana so popular. More than anything, though, everyone wants to taste the state’s mouth-watering cuisine.

Louisiana is famous for its food. Dishes like gumbo, jambalaya, and red beans and rice are cherished by people all across the globe. The state’s love for food and cooking is not only beneficial because of tourism, though, it is also one of the strongest assets in the state’s economy.

According to the Louisiana Restaurant Association’s Restaurant Industry at a Glance, restaurant and food service jobs in 2017 made up 10% of employment in Louisiana! The LRA even estimates that there will be 225,100 restaurant and food service jobs in the state by the year 2027.

According to many websites including Free Tours by Foot, the two most famous types of Louisiana cooking are Cajun and Creole food. These include most of the seafood dishes that Louisiana is known for including gumbo, jambalaya, and shrimp etouffee. Due to their many similarities in both appearance and ingredients, there are a lot of misconceptions about these types of cooking. Although a lot of people mistakenly confuse the two, there are a lot of differences between Cajun and Creole food such as their individual histories, their differences in recipes, and their appeal to different purposes.

Most Louisiana themed books, television programs, and

websites agree that the general rule of thumb for telling the two apart is that Cajun food is from the country while Creole food is from the city. Cajuns lived in rural swampy areas without easy access to imported resources. Instead, they had to cook with what they could find growing naturally. Creole food, on the other hand, is known for having foreign ingredients such as Sicilian tomatoes. This is mostly because of where they lived. According to the official New Orleans website, Creoles mostly lived in New Orleans which was a major port city. This meant that they had easy access to food items from all over the world.

French and Indian war, the British forced them to leave their homes. This was called the “Great Disturbance.”

According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, about 10,000 Acadians were deported between 1755 and 1763. For some groups of Acadians, the fatality rate of their exodus was estimated to be up to 53%. Obviously, this was a very dark time in their history.

The Acadians that survived were scattered across the continent. Some even moved all the way back to France. A large portion of the Acadians, though, moved to Louisiana. Over the course of many generations, the Acadian culture developed into that of the modern-day Cajun. In fact, the word “Cajun” was developed from the name “Acadian.”

The Head of the Nicholls State University Culinary Department Chef John Kozar is very passionate about the history of the Acadians. Due to his expertise in traditional Louisiana cooking, Kozar has developed a deep respect for these French refugees.



“Culture strongly influences cuisine. When the Acadians came to south Louisiana, they had been booted out of Eastern Canada so they did not have any money,” said Kozar. “The Acadians had to make their food based on what they could find here. They were hunters and trappers so they used the animals that were already here to make their food. There was also a lot of rice grown in the area, so that is also common in Cajun cuisine.”

The history of the Creole people is a little different. According to Data Center Research, there is a lot of confusion about the true meaning of the term “Creole” because it has developed several new meanings over the years. The original use of the word referred to people of any ethnicity or nationality that were descendants of the original French and Spanish settlers. Many were also the descendants of Native Americans and enslaved people.

Following the Louisiana Purchase, a lot of immigrants and Americans flooded into New Orleans. The people who were already living in the city wanted to distinguish themselves from these new foreigners so they began to refer to themselves as Creoles.

Due to their vastly different histories, Cajuns and Creoles had very different resources to work with when preparing their meals. Creoles, for instance, were able to shop for food items at markets while Cajuns were forced to use whatever was at hand.

Some of the items that are common in traditional Creole cooking include milk, butter, and tomatoes. These ingredients would have been difficult to find away from

the ports.

The easy access to foreign ingredients and exposure to the various races and nationalities living in New Orleans made Creole cuisine reflect a lot of different cultures. Some of the main influences include French, Caribbean, Spanish, Native, Italian, and African cuisines. A few of the traditional Creole dishes that have obvious inspiration from these cultures are red beans and rice, shrimp creole, and redfish court-bouillon.

Another Louisianian with a deep admiration for Cajun and Creole cuisine is Alex Theriot. Theriot has spent most of his life learning about traditional Creole food and how to prepare it. He really enjoys cooking with shrimp.

“Shrimp creole is one of my favorite dishes to serve,” said Theriot. “Creole cuisine is an important part of New Orleans’ history so it means a lot to me to keep the cooking traditions alive. The strong flavors, thick aroma, and mouth-watering visual appeal makes me proud to cook Creole food.”

The differences between Creole and Cajun cooking are obvious in some meals. For example, each form of cooking has a unique method of preparing gumbo. Both types of cooking use a roux but Creoles would make theirs in the traditional way. They would use butter and flour. Since the Cajuns could not get such products, they would use animal fats and oils as a substitute. Creole gumbo usually has a lot of tomato chunks as well according to the Gregory, a famous restaurant in Baton Rouge.

Both Creole and Cajun cooking make use of the



Holy Trinity (known as Mirepoix in French). The Trinity consists of green bell peppers, onions, and celery. A significant portion of Louisiana dishes make use of these three ingredients. They create the savory taste that New Orleans food is famous for.



the upper-class food they ate in Europe so they designed their meals around that kind of food,” said Kozar. “Cajuns, on the other hand, had to design their meals by necessity. They’d have to look at what they had caught that day and how they could best prepare it for their family.”

Another difference between Cajun and Creole cooking is the purpose of the meal. This difference can best be summed up through the old saying that can be found on nearly every Cajun or Creole food themed website:

“Creole folks can feed one family with three chickens while Cajun folks can feed three families with one chick-

en”.

One of the reasons Creole cuisine is different from Cajun cuisine is because it served a different purpose. Cajuns were cooking to survive while Creoles were creating artistic delicacies. Historically, many Cajun dishes had a less exciting appearance than those of the heavily decorated Creole dishes.

Throughout the years, the lines have been blurred between Cajun and Creole cooking. Before long, highways made it easier for Cajuns to travel into the city to buy ingredients and Creoles moved further into the country. The two cultures have mixed together so fluently that it can be difficult to tell them apart sometimes. Louisiana desserts are great examples of this.

Louisiana is widely known for its scrumptious desserts. Pralines, bread pudding, king cakes, and beignets are all classic New Orleans treats. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine which desserts originated from the Cajuns and which came from the Creoles.

Josie Cheramie is a Louisiana dessert specialist. She is a proud native of the state and enjoys spreading joy through her sweet treats. Cheramie is very passionate about the cultures that her desserts represent.

“I have always enjoyed cooking traditional Louisiana desserts. I love to see the joy that my food brings people,” said Cheramie. “My family mostly praises me for my bread pudding, but I cook everything to the best of my ability. There is a lot of history and culture involved in these desserts that needs to be remembered. Our Cajun and Creole ancestors worked hard to develop these recipes and now it’s our job to keep them alive.”

Despite the many differences between Cajun and Creole cooking, the two cultures have become hopelessly intertwined. A lot of people use the two names interchangeably and have forgotten about all of their cultural differences.

“It is important to keep in mind the histories and cultures that have shaped Louisiana,” said Theriot. “That’s a big part of what makes our state so beautiful.”





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