

*The immigrant's love song to New Orleans,
beautifully written by Richard Hugh Boyd.*

HERE ALREADY

If angels were real
And did walk among us
And were of a substance
We might lovingly touch
And if their smiles purest
Would be of all so known
And if their whispers sang
Sweetest songs ever heard
And if their arms enfolded
All joy so forever attained
And if their laughter filled
All darkness with light
And if their being bespoke
Richest love ever imagined
I would politely decline
Because you are here already.



Text: Richard Hugh Boyd ©2012 Used with permission.
Sculpture: *Monument to the Immigrant* by Franco Alessandrini,
Woldenberg Park, New Orleans. Photographed by Nick Martucci.

BEGINNINGS...

A BRIEF CULINARY IMMIGRATION HISTORY OF NEW ORLEANS

The site of New Orleans was occupied by native Americans at least since 400 A.D. The late Judge John Boutall, with whom I worked for many years, told me about a natural spring, now under Lake Pontchartrain, where he collected arrowheads as a boy at his aunt's property. Her property formerly had a peninsula which extended into the lake. The last remainders of his aunts property unclaimed by the lake is now the site of the post-Katrina 17th Street Canal pumping station.

When the Europeans explorers came to town, the area was "discovered" and claimed by the French in the 1690s with a first settlement named Port Bayou St. Jean. Ten years later, early European settlers were already established in the environs to be known as New Orleans. After an unsuccessful attempt at settlement in Mobile, Bienville returned to the site, had a map drawn and named it for Philip II, Duke d'Orléans. Prophetically, in 1722 the City was destroyed by a hurricane, but we rebuilt – the beginning of a long tradition. I like to think the "hurricane" was "whipped up" by all the unrest before the Petticoat Rebellion of 1722!

In the 1750s the Acadians arrived, turning into Cajuns!

Meanwhile in 1757, Isaac Monsanto and his business partner Manuel de Britto arrived from Curacao as New Orleans' first Jewish members.

The 1762 Treaty of Fontainebleau gave us to Spain. In 1763 Filipinos believed to be escaping from the Spanish Manila Galleon



Trade, established the fishing village of St. Malo in St. Bernard, the first Filipino settlement in the United States. The inhabitants, known as Manilamen, fought in the Battle of New Orleans, but kept the village a secret until 1883 when Lafcadio Hearn reported the story in Harper's Weekly. The Filipinos introduced the production of dried shrimp.

It was under the Spanish that the first slaves came to New Orleans, creating one of the greatest tragedies of our culture. Many were from Senegal where they were prisoners of war in a major ongoing religious battle between the local indigenous people who practiced an ancient animist religion and invading Islamic armies.

In April 1765 Joseph Broussard dit Beausoleil, military leader of the Acadian people entered into the Dauterive compact effectively establishing the cattle industry in Louisiana.

Between 1778 and 1783, 2100 Islenos or Canary Islanders came to St. Bernard.

In 1795 Spain granted the US the right to use our port and in 1800 in the Treaty of San Ildefonso, Spain gave us back to France.

In 1803, Napoleon sold us to the United States where we have been happily ensconced, more or less, the Confederacy being less, ever since.

As a result of the 1803 sale, “des américaines” moved to the City to establish the American government.

Toussaint L’Overture’s Revolution of 1804 in San Domingue brought many inhabitants from that area and from Cuba to New Orleans.

In 1812, the British tried to capture us, but they were heartily unsuccessful.

In the 1830s, French speakers still predominated in our population, but between 1830 and 1840 the population doubled due to the large influx of Germans escaping political situations and Irish escaping the potato famine. We were growing!

Because the 1850s brought Croatians to the area, the oyster industry started its growth.

In 1884 the Cotton Exposition, a World Fair, brought visitors to New Orleans, many of whom stayed, among them a number of Lebanese from the village of Dahr Safra.

The 1880s saw many southern Italians to the city, fleeing an unjust government.

After both World War I and World War II we saw an increase in European immigrants moving to New Orleans and joining already established populations. Europeans were not the only ones to come to New Orleans fleeing war. After 1948 the City saw an increase in Palestinians and Lebanese joining the City.

Post 1948 also brought an increase in Iraqis, Iranians and others connected with the blossoming oil industry.

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 in which Fidel Castro ousted Batista caused many wealthy and upper class Cubans to flee to New Orleans.

At the same time, Dr. Alton Ochsner’s internationally famous teaching hospital recruited many doctors from throughout Latin American and India who ultimately settled here.

From 1955 to 1975, the Vietnam War led to immigration of many Southeast Asians to New Orleans, especially the Vietnamese.

In one of the most successful social experiments of the City, the government of the City of New Orleans, the Federal government, Associated Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, HANO, the New Orleans Public Service and many other businesses and non-profit and governmental agencies, joined together to prepare in the city to receive Vietnamese refugees and provide services including churches, community centers, job searches, SBA loans, English Second Language lessons, and arranged utility payments pending employment, among others. Out of respect for historical differences and to prevent the negative effects associated with overcrowding, three different areas of the City were prepared. Today over 16,000 Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Americans call New Orleans home, creating a boom in Vietnamese restaurants.

After 1967 the City experienced an increase in the number of Palestinians, Lebanese and other Middle Easterners, escaping war and political situations and contributing to the creation of some of our leading Middle Eastern restaurants.

Just as the Cotton Exposition had done before, the 1984 World’s Fair brought people from around the globe to New Orleans and once again, many stayed!

Hurricane Katrina affected New Orleans cuisine in many ways. Due to the huge demand for construction, many Mexican contractors and laborers came to the City and many have stayed and settled with their families. This has in turn created a boom in Mexican restaurants and grocery stores!

Mexicans were not the only people opening restaurants. There was an unstoppable demand for restaurants during the period of rebuilding which encouraged relocation by out of town restaurateurs or entry into the field by new people. Many people from other States, seeking to avoid the U.S. recession moved to the one place which desperately needed workers and have made New Orleans their home- our own American immigrants!





AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Africa in New Orleans

The Congo Square Rhythms Festival held in New Orleans in the Spring celebrates the culture, contributions and comingling of Africa and New Orleans. Starting with African Drum Circles and folkdances by the Culu Children's Traditional African Dance Company, the Festival traces the development of the comingling of cultures, progressing through Mardi Gras Indian Battles in dance to traditional gospel by greats such as the Zion Harmonizers to celebrations of Brass Bands. It is tragic that many of the ancestors of our African-American New Orleanians were forced into slavery, but they proved a will and a spirit to thrive. So great has been their influence on New Orleans that our current culture would not exist but for them.

The Middle East in New Orleans

Individuals of middle eastern ancestry have been a part of New Orleans at least since 1757. The earliest arrivals of middle eastern ancestry were Jewish and have built a thriving, lively and culturally aware community. Jewish New Orleanians who have contributed much to the city including Judah. Touro, founder of the City's first congregation, Leon Godchaux, who revived the Louisiana economy and revolutionized the sugar industry after the Civil War, Isaac Delgado, founder of the New Orleans Museum of Art, Edith

Cohen, the first female doctor in Louisiana, philanthropist Edith Rosenwald Stern and Samuel I. Rosenberg, who accomplished the peaceful integration of the New Orleans Public School system. The Adloyadah Purim Festival at the Jewish Community Center is always fun! Kosher food stuffs are available both at the Kosher-Cajun Deli in Metairie and Stein's Deli uptown.

Individuals of non-Judaic middle eastern ancestry came to Louisiana in increasing numbers between the Civil War and World War I. In New Orleans for over a hundred years now, many were Arab and French speaking Christian and non-Christian Lebanese and Syrians, attracted to Louisiana for its French heritage. Kalistee Saloom and Racheed Saloom, for whom Kalistee Saloom Road is named in Lafayette, are perhaps the best know of this group. Byblos store on Veterans Hwy is an excellent provisioner for Lebanese and other Middle Eastern foods.

Islamic Arabs. The two largest Islamic Arab groups in New Orleans are Pakistanis and Iraqis. With one constructed mosque in Metairie and another under construction on the West Bank, it is no wonder the number of special groceries is on the rise! Kased Brothers Halal Meat is the place to go for lamb as well as other meat items. Mona's operates one of the most complete Middle Eastern grocery stores in the City and is famous for its pita bakery.



CLEOPATRA MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

Chefs Al & Louie Joudeh

NORTH AFRICAN VEGETARIAN COUSCOUS

This culinary oasis on the West Bank created by accomplished Chef Al Joudeh and his son Chef Louie Joudeh outdoes its royal namesake! Obviously classically trained, these chefs can hold their own in any restaurant in this City. North African Couscous is popular in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and France. Served as part of Cleopatra's vegetarian plate with Hummus, Tabouli, Dolmeh, Falafel, Baba Ghanouj and Pita, the Chefs prepare couscous in the traditional two hour method, hand incorporating oil and liquids in each grain prior to three steamings in a couscoussiere, a double boiler with holes in the bottom of the upper pot. Anywhere steam escapes, the crack is sealed with dough. For the home cook, the Chefs have provided a less traditional but effective method of preparation.

SERVES 4

To a medium saucepan over high heat add **1 1/4 cups water** or **vegetable stock**, **1 teaspoon turmeric**, **1/2 teaspoon saffron**, **1/8 teaspoon black pepper**, and **1 teaspoon salt**, bringing to a boil. Add **1/2 carrot** or **12 baby carrots**, **1/4 inch dice** and boil for 1 minute. Add **1/2 yellow crookneck squash**, **1/4 inch dice** and **1/2 zucchini**, **1/4 inch dice** and continue to boil for an additional 2 minutes. Remove vegetables with a slotted spoon and reserve warm. Measure water. If necessary add additional water to make one and one-quarter cups. Return water to saucepan and bring to boil. Add **2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil**. While stirring, add **1/2 cup couscous**. Cover and immediately remove saucepan from heat. Remain covered for 3 minutes. Remove cover and plump with fork. Combine with vegetables and serve.







ZOZO'S CHICKEN

This little gem in Metairie blooms with the care and attention lavished upon it by the Zouzous, starting with the beautiful plants in front..The same care seen outside carries inside where Pam prepares each dish with careful attention to flavor, color and presentation. Many of the recipes are from Abdul's mother's kitchen and harken back to his childhood.

Serves 8

Season **8 skinless chicken thighs** with **1/2 tsp granulated garlic**, **1/2 tsp rosemary**, **1/2 tsp black pepper** and **1T oregano**. Heat **2 T olive oil** in a large sauté pan or skillet and brown chicken on all sides. Transfer to a 9x13 greased, sprayed or non-stick baking pan. Preheat oven to 350F. In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat in **2 tsp olive oil**, sauté **1 each medium green and red bell pepper, julienned**, **1/2 c each chopped white and chopped red onion** until onion is translucent. Transfer to baking pan atop chicken. Top with **20-30 kalamata olives**. Bake for 90 minutes. During the last 30 minutes of baking time, in a 2 quart saucepan melt **3T unsalted butter**. Toast **1/4 c vermicelli, broken into 1/2 inch pieces** by sautéing in butter. Add **2 c long grain white rice** and **toast**. Add **4 1/2 c chicken stock**, **1/2 tsp turmeric**, **1/2 tsp salt** and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to low, simmer for 20 minutes or until all stock is absorbed. Serve chicken over **rice** with **feta** and **parsley**.



ZOZO'S

Restaurateur Abdulhamid Zouzou
and Chef Pamela Zouzou





KOSHER CAJUN DELI & GROCERY

Restaurateur Joel Brown

Dedicated to Natalie Brown

MATZO BALL SOUP

Joel and Natalie is a love story that lives on in their children and in the comfort that Kosher-Cajun brings to so many others, especially through their “comfort foods”, including this Matzo Ball Soup.

To a 5 quart stockpot, add **4 quarts of water** and bring to a boil. Add **5 Tablespoons Kosher chicken base**. In a medium bowl, beat **2 eggs** and add **2 Tablespoons vegetable oil**. Add **1/2 cup matzo meal**. Blend and mix until evenly distributed. Chill by refrigerating 15-20 minutes. Form chilled batter into matzo balls using wet hands and a tablespoon or scoop. To a 4 quart pot, add **2 quarts water** and bring to a rolling boil. Using a spoon, slide matzo balls into water. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 30 - 35 minutes. To serve, simmer matzo balls in chicken soup for 5 minutes, then plate and garnish with dried parsley.







LOX 'N' BAGEL

When Philadelphia attorney Dan Stein headed south in hot pursuit of the culinary arts it was New Orleans' gain. Here Dan shares his scrumptious lox and bagel.

Serves 1

On one **Davidovich Everything or other Multigrain Bagel** smear **cream cheese** and top with **Nova lox, tomato, red onion** and **capers**.



STEIN'S MARKET & DELI

Owner Dan Stein





DRUNKEN HALLOUMI

Even though New Orleans had an established and long term Lebanese community, Beirut natives Hicham Khodr, Gabriel Saliba and Tarek Tay realized the woeful lack of Lebanese restaurants in this City. Byblos opened in New Orleans in 1994. Multiple locations and successes have followed. Halloumi cheese from Cyprus has a high melting point making it perfect for grilling or pan frying. This dish is named drunken Halloumi because the goat and sheep cheese is combined with ouzo, which is popular in Cyprus.

Cut **1 lb halloumi**. into 1/2 inch thick slices and marinate in **1/2 c. olive oil** and **2 preserved lemons, rind only**. Combine **1 c. plain yogurt, 1 T. olive oil, 1/2 cucumber seeded and fine dice, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1 T. minced fresh mint, 1 T. minced fresh dill, 1 T. lemon juice, 1 clove garlic, finely minced** and reserve chilled. Slice **1 beefsteak tomato** and reserve room temperature. In a *saganaki* or small frying pan, warm **1 T. olive oil** and **2 T. oregano, minced**. Remove halloumi from marinade and discard marinade. Pan fry halloumi, turning once until golden on both sides. Plate **3 tomato slices** and top first with sauce and then with a slice of halloumi each. Remove pan from heat and while off of heat source, deglaze with **1 T. ouzo**, and pour over halloumi. Top with the **juice of one quarter lemon**.

BYBLOS

Restaurateurs
Hicham Khodr,
Gabriel Saliba
and Tarek Tay







CHICKEN SHAWARMA

Chef & Owner Hussain Alsherees worked his way through every job in the restaurant business, starting as a dishwasher and working his way up. Chef also experienced different restaurants, including Mona's Café, another New Orleans Best Ethnic Restaurant winner. Chef Alsherees' Lebanon Café has been on this corner for 13 years. Opening on November 3, his was one of the first restaurants open after Katrina. He credits his continuing success to his loyal crew who came back quickly and worked tirelessly during the 3 week cleanup.

In a blender combine **1 tsp. salt, 1 head garlic, crushed, 1/2 c. lemon juice, 4 T. plain yogurt, 1/4 c. fresh tomatoes, chopped, pinch crushed red pepper, 1 tsp. cumin, 1 tsp. cardamom, 1/8 tsp. cayenne, pinch nutmeg** and a **pinch of turmeric** and process until smooth. To a large mixing bowl add **2.5 lbs skin on boneless chicken breasts**. Keeping the skin prevents the chicken from being too dry when cooked. Cover with marinade and refrigerate for 24-48 hours. At Lebanon's Café, the chicken is cooked on a traditional vertical roaster, but at home, grill on a BBQ grill or electric grill or panini grill. Serve plated or on **pita bread** with **hummus, salad** and **tzatziki sauce**.



LEBANON'S CAFÉ
Restaurateur & Chef Hussain Alsherees





KIBBY

Restaurateur Karim Taha is the epitome of success, first baking 42,000 hot, locally made pita breads per week in his large bakery, then feeding hungry crowds at Jazz Fest and ultimately building an empire of restaurants around the City. This charming and gracious gentleman now shares this recipe with us!

MONA'S CAFÉ

Restaurateur Karim Taha

Makes 40. May freeze prior to frying.

Make spice mix from equal parts of **allspice, cumin, coriander, nutmeg, cinnamon, curry** and **turmeric**. To make kibby shell mix, wash **4 1/2 cups #1 Fine Bulgur** with **ice water**, drain and refrigerate for 2 hours. In a food processor, combine chilled bulgur, **3 lb ground lamb** or **beef**, **3 medium onions, minced**, **1 red pepper, minced**, **1 Tablespoon salt**, **1 teaspoon black pepper**, **1 teaspoon of spice mix** and process until a dough-like consistency. To make kibby stuffing, sauté **3 lbs coarsely ground beef** or **lamb**, **3 onions, chopped**, **1 Tablespoon salt**, **1 Tablespoon black pepper**, **1 Tablespoon spice mixture** until meat is completely cooked. Cool. To assemble kibby, keeping hands wet, roll shell mix into a ball, poking a hole in the center and filling with stuffing mix. Pinch closed. Pinch ends to form a football. Fry in 350 degree oil on stove top or in deep fryer for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.







Vida Khoobehi and her husband Bahram Khoobehi bring Turkish food to New Orleans. The son of a famous Turkish chef, Bahram Khoobehi began his apprenticeship at age 11. A classically trained chef in the cuisine of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, he is a graduate of the Turkish culinary school Dort Aksam Sanat Okulu. The gracious, charming and knowledgeable Vida runs the staff with life, vitality and thoughtfulness for others. "Armut" is the Turkish word for "pear."

Serves 6

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Skin and core **6 pears**, cutting bottom flat. Reserve peelings. Place pears in a baking pan and cover with **dry red wine**. Add **1 c. sugar**, **1 c. lemon juice** and **2 cinnamon sticks**. Place skin, core and any other reserved peelings in baking pan, cover with foil, and bake in oven for 1 hour. To plate, chill pear, stuff with **walnuts**, drizzle with **chocolate syrup** and **whipped cream**. Garnish with a sprinkling of **walnuts** and a **mint sprig**.



COURTYARD GRILL

Restaurateur Vida Khoobehi
and Chef Bahram Khoobehi





FATOUSH

Chef Suleyman Aydin &
Restaurateur Fatma Aydin



GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

Chef Suleyman Aydin and Restaurateur Fatma Aydin are so gifted with energy and good cheer that success, happiness and people naturally follow them. Chef Suleyman's menu excludes refined sugars and flours, hydrogenated oils and sweeteners while serving some of the best food in town. Restaurateur Fatma is known for a string of successes including Mona Lisa, Café Roma, The Italian Pie, Fellini's, Angeli, and Santa Fe. With Fatoush she takes Mediterranean food to boutique chic.

Serves 4

For the marinade, combine **1 cup skim milk, 1 T. red pepper paste, 1 Tablespoon yellow mustard, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, 1 teaspoon finely ground black peppercorn, 2 Tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, and 2 cloves garlic, minced** in a glass or other non-reactive baking dish.

Slice **1 rack of lamb** into individual chops or purchase 16 lamb chops, 6 ounces each and place in the pan. Cover and refrigerate, marinating for at least 12 hours.

Place chops on an oiled and heated grill, sear for 2 minutes, flip and grill an additional 3 minutes for medium-rare and 3 1/2 minutes for medium.







DORO TIBS IN SPINACH AND ONION SAUCE ON INJERA

Quiet and unassuming on the outside, but inside – gracious, warm, sharing, full of laughter – this is Cafe Abyssinia. You are included and invited to meet new friends in the best Ethiopian tradition of hospitality as you pass huge platters, drink tea and learn a new definition of community. A national dish of both Eritrea and Ethiopia, injera is a gluten free flatbread, thicker than a crepe and thinner than a pancake on which food is served and with which it is eaten like a scoop or soft tortilla. Made from teff, a fast-growing short season annual grass grain high in fiber, iron, protein, calcium and carbohydrate, injera is a possible bread substitute for those suffering from Celiac. Although it does not survive frost, teff, which is both drought and flood tolerant is being grown in the U.S. and teff flour is available for sale on the internet from a number of U.S. manufacturers.

Serves 4-6 with 2 servings of injera each

Combine **1 1/2 c. teff flour** and **2 c. water**. Cover and let stand at room temperature until it bubbles and has a sour odor, overnight to up to 3 days depending on temperature. If it does not ferment, add **1 teaspoon yeast**. Add **a pinch of salt**. Lightly oil a completely clean and smooth non-stick electric skillet or cast iron skillet. Heat over medium heat or until a water drop bounces on the surface. Pour batter to cover bottom of skillet, **1/4 c. batter** in an 8 to 9 inch skillet. Cook briefly until air holes form on the surface and the surface is dry. Do not brown. Remove and reserve warm stacked between foil. Serve beneath the main dish or on the side, rolled.

Cafe Abyssinia

Ethiopian Cuisine

3511 Magazine

Open Mon-Sunday

CAFE ABYSSINIA

Chef Samuel Shifferaw





BEREBERE SPICE MIXTURE

This spice mixture is an integral part of Ethiopian cuisine. The Ethiopian chili, *Capsicum frutescens* also known as barbaré, is a major component. One of its cultivars is also very well known in Louisiana as the Tabasco pepper!

Serves 4

In a small skillet on medium-low heat, toast **1 teaspoon cumin, 2 whole cloves, 3/8 teaspoon cardamom, 1/4 teaspoon whole black peppercorns, 1/8 teaspoon whole allspice, 1/2 teaspoon fenugreek seeds,** and **1/4 teaspoon coriander seeds** for about 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove skillet from heat and cool for 5 minutes. Remove stems from **2 small dried *Capsicum frutescens* red chilies.** With a mortar and pestle, finely grind together toasted spices and chilies. Add **1/4 teaspoon grated fresh gingerroot or 1/2 teaspoon dried gingerroot, 1/8 teaspoon turmeric, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 1/4 tablespoons sweet paprika, 1/16 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/16 teaspoon ground cloves** and mix well.



NILE

Restaurateur Tessaye Mendesha

