

GUMBO AND RICE

My father discovered Gumbo on a trip to New Orleans. It was probably my favorite dinner in my father's repertoire growing up. I believe it was also the start of my hot sauce addiction. My dad would have file powder and tobasco sauce at the table and while my taste for file had its limits I discovered and ever growing craving for peppers, vinegar and heat. As I grew accustomed to the heat more hot sauce went in. Soon it was not hot at all. But the taste was equally addictive and at 9 it didn't occur to me to seek out hotter sauces, so my addiction went on pause. It wasn't until decades later that the allure of hot peppers would entrance me again. It was pretty amusing until I ran into a ghost pepper and couldn't see straight for 25 minutes. I still love it hot and peppery but I'm not chasing anymore of those dragons.

Gumbo is a really unique stew featuring unusual flavors and textures from the browned roux and the okra combined with sausage, seafood and the holy trinity of creole cooking; bell peppers, onions, and celery. The Seven Stars rice works perfectly with gumbo (and just about anything for that matter). Gumbo can be made in about an hour start to finish but as with most stews improves in flavor over night. This recipe is also makes a big pot, about 5 quarts. I like to put several quarts in the freezer for instant comfort anytime.

As with most stews it is meant to be a catch all for the best of what's around. It can be made vegetarian or with just seafood or just pork. Feature the vegetables and meats that you have around and you'll always have a hit.



Ingredients:

1. 3 bell peppers
2. 2 medium yellow onions
3. 7 stalks of celery
4. 4-6 cloves of garlic
5. 4 cups chopped tomatoes
6. 1/4 cup tomatoe paste
7. 4 bay leaves
8. 8 cups water
9. 4 cups okra
10. 12 ounces andoulie sausage
11. 1 pound mixed seafood (crab, shrimp, squid, mussels, etc.)
12. 2 teaspoons salt
13. 1 teaspoon black pepper
14. 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
15. 1/3 cup wheat flour
16. 1/3 cup vegetable oil

Directions:

1. Dice the onions, bell peppers and celery and saute or steam in the bottom of a large pot (5-8 quarts) for ten minutes
2. Meanwhile slice the okra and sausage and set aside.
3. Add the tomatoes, chicken thighs, garlic, bay leaves and tomato paste and simmer for ten minutes
4. Combine the flour and oil in a heavy bottomed pan and cook on medium high heat until well browned. Be careful not to burn...stir it the whole time while it is browning and don't take your eye off it.
5. Add the okra, water and the roux and simmer for ten minutes
6. Put your rice on to simmer
7. Add the sausage and seafood, simmer for ten minutes and then its done.
8. Season with 2 teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon black pepper

