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Languages, ways of cooking and religion: French Inspiration, Jewish Rites and Creole practices

“I understood that a great part of my culture was defined by my foodways, told me one on my interviewees”. How could we define foodways?

For ethnologists, the cuisine is the expression of cultural history and identity, communication and performance. Foodways show how the Southern Jewish communities choose to express diverse cultural roots. They connect Jewish families with the Jewish geography, socially, spiritually and emotionally. It's a way for people to express themselves. It is also a strong heritage as opposed to museums, churches, which are fragile. It can be seen, smelt and tasted. It gives pleasure but like any other pleasure it is fragile. It is also a woman's language and heritage. Each family has their own recipes which are kept and only passed to their families and friends, and they even make their own cookbooks.

It is also a way of remembering and honouring a deceased member of your family: For example during my research in 1994, I met a Jewish lady in her seventies in New Orleans, and she told me she baked a

cheese-pie the day her mother died: she woke up early in the morning and she had coffee with her breakfast because her mother was used to baking cheese pies.

Food ways vary from one family to the other and also from one country to the other. Big differences exist between the French, the Alsace region the Ashkenazi cuisine and the Sephardic one.

As for the French and Creole side, there are more than one hundred cookbooks in New Orleans. As a whole, it is a very delicate, even dangerous topic because everyone knows something about it and their even experts on the subject.

The famous anthropologist Levi Strauss quotes “food is good to think” that the food is a good means to think: *La nourriture est bonne à penser.*

In other words, the question will be how gefilte fish, matzo balls could interact with gumbo, jambalaya, stuffed crawfish based with pork and shellfish, how can both cuisine live together: the multiethnic sophisticated cuisine of New Orleans with the long existing Jewish food which obeys to strict dietary laws.

Can we combine the traditional Jewish cuisine with the cuisine of African American Southerners, combined African okras and yams, the cornbread and pies of the White Southerner? Was there really creolisation of Jewish food?

Who are the people who played their part in this connection: Jews immigrated from the South and came from the West Indies, from

France, Germany, East Europe or Africa American cooks working in the Jewish families or interaction of all of them?

At the beginning of the XIXth century, the importance of foodways was so great that it has provoked the anger of one of the first immigrants of New Orleans who could not comply to Jewish cooking traditions. It is said that a New York merchant in New Orleans, Jacob Solis could not purchase any unleavened bread (*matzot*) for Passover and had to bake. (Jews of New Orleans, An Archival Guide introduced by Irvin Lachoff and ed by Lester Sullivan 1998). He was very mad admonested his Jewish friends and on the next year he started the first Jewish community. As you know the first Jewish immigrants were not so jealous and were not real leaders up to the 1820ies. Jacob Solis initiated the first Jewish congregation which was chartered in 1828, Congregation Shangari Chassad (Gates of Mercy).

The common features of both cuisines and their culinary practices

-Although creole and Jewish foodways differ in taste, both cultures appreciate a big appetite: boiled and fried meats, overcooked vegetables, abundant fruit, numerous sweets and hot breads. There is even a cookbook called la “bouche creole” (written by Leon E Soniat Jr) which emphasized the gourmet’s side of the creole cookery.

- Both Jewish immigrants and native Southerners view food as a way to celebrate their daily life and to share it with others.

-When we consider Jewish foodways, there is the same variety in the ways of preparing food as in creole cuisine: stuffing, grating, baking, making a roux, boiling, frying, cooking à l'étouffée (with low temperature with the pot is covered with a top) .

-The same importance of vegetables, spices, and seasonings, and variety of herbs

- Another common feature is the importance of hospitality. It is a common value. It's a way of sharing home and sharing food, a way of honouring one's hosts.

Welcoming foreigners in Jewish homes is essential as Jews have been themselves foreigners in other lands. Foreigners are often invited and are not supposed to stay alone for Sabbath or during Jewish holidays

The traditional components of Jewish food

Jewish foodways consists of basic cheap ingredients. It combines sweet and sour, but each branch of Judaism has its specialities: Ashkenazi German cuisine will have strudel breads, roasted goose. Eastern Jews, will have all types of kugels, with noodles eggs and raisins, liver paté, chick peas, balls of meat : *picked fish* , *brisket*, beef tongue, *tcholent* (meat stew) or, *gefilte fish* (chopped fish with bread. with apples) , herrings and pain perdu, cheesecake, strudels, *kreplach* or *blintz* (*crepes with meat or cheese*,); Alsace Lorraine tradition will consist of green carp, chicken soup, pot au feu (stewed meat) and a

variety of deserts, *chaleth* and all sorts of torte and kuchen with cinnamon “zemetkuchen, we still cook

The Jewish Sephardic foodways are rather different too, with its fava, its beans, dates, olive oil, its carrots with safron, chouchouka, stuffed eggplants, its rice with fried chicken and lemon beef stews tfinas, pomegranates and honey pastries¹.

Jewish foodways obey to special dietary laws.

The kosher food and its rules

Let me remind you the main dietary laws separating the sacred part of life Jewish holidays shabbath included the holidays, and is there for part the secular life, there is no mixture. Big Holidays are Yom Kippur, Passover, (days of repentance), Purim, Chavouot to honour the seasons and the Torah. Each celebration consists of blessings and rituals and t eating food is part of the celebration. For New Year, Jewish people will traditionally eat apple with honey and milk to celebrate prosperity expecting a sweet year. Passover will be the period of eating without any unleavened food; no bread is consumed but matzot to symbolize the 40 years spending in the desert, and the freedom of coming out of Egypt.

Distinction is strongly emphasized between sacred and secular days, and the non mixing of certain food groups, such as dairy and meat along with the Old Testament prohibitions: you won't eat the lamb in the same mother's milk pot.

You only may eat peaceful animals and not carnivorous neither birds with claws, only ruminants animals with cleft hooves. Biblical interdicts make a strict difference between what is « kosher » from what is « treife ».

The main prohibition is consuming pork.

Every authorized animal must be killed under the supervision of a *shohet* with a special knife. As for fish: fish with scales and fins which are separated from the water with fins. That means no shellfish which is basic New Orleans food. Why?

Shellfish food have no means of perambulation; they stick to the bottom of the sea or to the rocks or to the poles.

Dietary laws also dictate how foods are prepared. Everything must be certified by a rabbi in accordance with kosher law, and every grocery item must be kosher approved.

How to respect dietary laws in a region that consumed bacon with the grits, ham lard, pigs feet, salt pork, sausages. During the colonial period, Mordecai Sheftall of Georgia in 1788 was advised by his Christian friend: “Don’t forget to bring your sharp knife with you have to slaughter your animals in the ritual manner letting blood, otherwise you get hungry.

The answer of non orthodox Jews to the prohibition was that shellfish can be eaten because it is not pork. It was a way to assimilate to the gentile culture much easier than in the counterpart in the North in the big cities because there were not as many people. Jewish population is about 1 to 1.5 % of the New Orleans population

What about the creole cuisine. ?

Creole cuisine, is the result of a multicultural crossing with the diversity of local resources, the contributions of African and European population. New Orleans cuisine has created specific foodways. Creole cuisine is the heart of New Orleans style of life. It is a real richness, a part of the city.

Its birth

Currently as far as I know, Creole cuisine was founded in the XIXth century. As New Orleans is the centre of the import-export trade, cotton exchange market it attracts a very diverse population. It is a cultural center with its opera house, its Hotels such as Tremolet hotel, Saint Louis Hotel in Saint Charles Avenue, its pensions. In 1860, the white population numbered 144 601, the free men of color 10, 939, slaves 14, 484, about de 170 024. The whites composed² 85 % de la population, free men of color 6,4 %, slaves 8,5 % ³.from 1860 up to 1900, creole population (half castes) gives birth to a specific culture with its qualified craftsmen, architects musicians, painters, associations, free masonry .

The Jewish population is about 2000 in New Orleans and 8000 in Louisiana

² En 1859, la Louisiane comprenait déjà 8000 juifs, et la Nouvelle Orléans, 2000 selon Rader Marcus, *op.cit.* p. 81, bien davantage que Charleston ville d'implantation juive dès 1750 qui ne compte que 700 juifs selon le même auteur à la même date, p. 204.

³ John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880*, Chicago, 1973 cité par Hirsh and Logson, *op.cit.* p.206.; John W. Blassingame, *the Slave Community, Plantation Life in The South in the Antebellum South*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1972, 1979.

So foodways reflect the presence of a multifaceted population with contrasted foodways, a cast iron melting pot.

French cuisine. Chefs regularly are invited from France to try out new dishes.

Out of French cuisine, creole cuisine has adopted and kept the terms of the “roux”, the grill”, the boiled, the rich sauces and the French language : “Bisque”, (soup) trout “meuniere” (with butter), “court bouillon” Saute, soufflés », « café brûlot (with armagnac white spirit) ...⁴

A Cosmopolitan Food

In addition to French cuisine thanks to the teaching of the French Ursulines. Cooks used bay leafs, and oregano as a type of medicine to prevent or reduce swelling, parsley to remove the smell of garlic, shallots to give strength. Spanish and Italians had introduced tomatoes and hot spices, Native Americans, filé powder from the branches of sassafras, African Americans, rice, red beans gumbos, creole sauce, turtle soup, transforming the brown roux into a dark redolent base. According to Lafcadio Hearn in creole cuisine, we can find the *Gombo Filé*, la Bouillabaisse, le *court-bouillon*, le *Jambalaya*, Salade russe, Crawfish Bisque, le Pousse Café, Café brûlé, Brûlot....⁵»

As British Chef Kevin Graham at the Windsor Court explains in the New Orleans Compass Guide: “The confusing part is, Creoles would appropriate French names and techniques and then running off

⁴ Café avec de l’Armagnac qui s’accompagne de pralines pécan.

with them: in another direction: would apply different names to the produce. But isn't the case for any language and cuisine?

Grand and Popular

Creole cuisine is a combination of French tradition of Aristocrats, *The Grandissimes* 1881 described by the writer Cable and a production of lower class people. Creole identity is forged during 1884-1885 along with the big Cotton Fair. Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) writer and journalist who has lived New Orleans between 1878 and 1888 and wrote the book *Historical Sketch Book and Guide to New Orleans*. He consigns the New Orleans foodways, its norms and different menus. The *Christian Exchange Creole Cookery book* brings its contribution to a native cuisine, at homes, restaurants alongside French markets.

Grand Saint Charles Hotel Avenue proposed, in 1885, menus with ten courses for 20 dollars: oysters, turtle soup, broiled pompano, game two vegetables, a second course with duck and turkey soufflé, dessert, a coffee.

An ordinary meal will be consisted of fish, *sweetbread*, lamb cutlet, chicken, roast-beef or veal, un ore two vegetables, cheese, dessert fruit, gello, and coffee to 2 50 §⁶ according to the *New Orleans Guide*, Bethany Ewald Bultman.

The richness of products and tastes has been interpreted by famous chefs and restaurants Antoine, Galatoire, Brennan.

⁵ S. Frederick Starr *Inventing New Orleans*, Writings of Lafcadio Hearn, Jackson, ed. United Press of Mississippi, p. 191-198.

⁶ Rima and Richard Collin, *New Orleans Cookbook*, New York, Alfred A Knopf, 2004, p. 3-6.

African American cooks have played their roles adapting the soul food and learning how to cook Jewish food

How to accommodate: shock of cultures between North and South?

Presently when Jewish people are coming from big cities from the North such as Dretroit, Pittsburgh, they are quite surprised. Some of them have even brought their Jewish grocery an in their removal trucks they told me twenty years ago. One my interviewees noted Deli here have nothing to do her deli corn beef, brisket, real Jewish food:

” Why did you bring over here this deli? It is not the deli I know but French bread not with mayonnaise. There is no brisket. What is this mankind who put butter in their deli? Something is going wrong” ...

What was going wrong with this person in 1997 coming from Detroit?”

Meat and butter, it is not kosher but « *treife* ». It is a surprising taste for traditional Jews. No brisket neither

Gombo and matzo balls, crossing cuisines

Gombo soup is really the metaphor of the blended population of this region.

As you know gombo, called okra also called Nkruma takes it origin from the word « nkruman out of the African Gold Coast and from Angola called « ngumbo », transformed into « gombo ». The okra

grew along the Banks of Nile in Egypt and the Egyptian cultivated it. It spreads over North Africa, the Mediterranean region and even India. It travelled through Brazil, Dutch Guinea and spread all over the USA up to Philadelphia in 1781. The okra culture is closely linked to plantations.

Nowadays, it is a very complex soup. It can be Cajun with sausage “oyster sausage file gombo”. Spanish has added rice and spices, the French the art of making the roux and fresh vegetables. It combines sea food and food from the land⁷.

Fishermen and their little houses were very instrumental to provide sea food. I remember having gone to Bucktown, to the Bruning restaurant: the family was coming from Baden land in 1859 and having a very popular restaurant very much frequented by Jewish families before Katrina too.⁸ They were supposed to fish their own sea food.

So far, for many families, seafood is considered as kosher: « shrimp is no pork, it is something different, told me one of my interviewees as I said before⁹.

Many families explain this tolerance. They considered seafood as a basic element of creole food and it has been long tolerated by Reform Judaism which represents about 75 % to 80 of Jews now living in the city. The majority of them did not want to be apart and wished to socialize with their gentile friends. Sharing food in the South is an important rite of conviviality. Another reason was that many

⁷ Leon E. Soniat Jr, *La bouche créole*, Gretna (Louisiane), Pelican, 1981 ; *Jambalaya, Official Cookbook, 1984*, Louisiana World Exposition, New Orleans, the Union League of New Orleans, 1983.

⁸ Compte tenu des destructions du dernier cyclone Katrina, il faudrait peut-être écrire ces phrases au passé.

⁹ Sylvia Julian Marcus, Entretien du 23 septembre 1994.

assimilated families did not consider kosher food as an important feature of their Jewish culture and felt they could stay Jewish without being kosher and even they had no choice. They could not find Jewish kosher food easily and had to order it from other cities from Memphis or Atlanta.

However at the beginning of the XIXth century, orthodox families belonging to Beth Israël would go to Kansas Delicatessen in Canal Street whose kosher pickles were well known.

Even Jewish cookbooks did not praise kosher food

At the end of the XIXth century, two famous cookbooks in 1889, *Aunt Babette's Cook Book Foreign and Domestic Receipts for the Household* was written by Bertha Kramer, and in 1901 the *Settlement Cook Book*, written by Lizzie Kander. These two recipe books have been handed to many generations of Jewish families and give basic information about the managing the house and the cookery.

For *Aunt Babette Book* author, Bertha F. Kramer, nothing is « *trefe* » when it is sane and clean. » *Aunt Babette cookbook* is en 1889 is published *Bloch Publishing* de Cincinnati. Bertha F. Kramer is better known for its Russian Charlotte and its oysters mode escalope than for its matzo balls¹⁰.

It is a way of proving its American appurtenance, accepting the diversity of foodways and rejecting the Jewish dietary laws. Jewish food has been under the influence of Creole cuisine, the Southern and the American.

¹⁰ Marcie Cohen Ferris, *op. cit.*

Southern and Jewish rules

In 1994, for the celebration of the anniversary of Natchez temple presided by Rabbi Shindler, leader of Reform Judaism, descendants of the founders of the Temple, Mrs Elaine Ullmann had to negotiate between Southern tradition ham biscuits she could not do without and Kosher rules. She found a very clever solution: she proposed ham biscuits at one end of the table, and at the other end, biscuits without ham and for dinner, fried chicken for the kosher crowd and catfish for the others.

We also have to pay a tribute to Beulah Ledner Levy. She was called the Doberge Queen of New Orleans. She changed the original recipe of the Hungarian Austrian Inspiration dobo torte (dobo : drum) from thin layers of butter cake with a custard filling because it was too rich for New Orleans climate. She also changed the name Dobo Torte, she adapted into a French sounding version “Doberge.”

Who was Beulah Ledner ?

She was born in 1894 at Sainte Rose, La. Abraham Levy came from a small town located fifteen miles from Strasbourg, Duppigheim (Alsace). Her mother came from Landau, Rhenish Palatinate. Her father Abraham Levy met Emma Moritz in Baton Rouge. He was the local postmaster in Saint Rose and owned a store. Beulahs mother came from a baker’s family. Her grand- father was famous in Germany, owned a bakery and operated a hostellery (Gasthaus).

Beulah became one of the first bakers in New Orleans area and remained active in the bakery and the catering business for nearly 50 years up to 1981 till the age of 87.

Her success started with a lemon meringue pie. She used her talent first to supplement the family income catering for friends and families during the Depression. She started her bakery at the age of 37 in the family kitchen. Two years later, in 1933, she became professional. She moved to 1200 Lowerline Street. Students from Newcomb and Tulane considered it was the place to eat, according to her biographer Maxine Wolchansky. She became a caterer for New Orleans weddings as well as for the Boston club. Her last bakery was located at 3501 Hessmer Avenue, the site was designed by her son Albert Ledner an architect whom I met in 1992. Her store was sold and became *Maurice French Pastry*, and its sign is multilingual and meaningful:

« *Irish Cream Doberge, Kugelhopf, Chocolate Delight, et beaucoup plus* ».

Multi ethnic cakes with a slightly French eloquence.

Beulah was better known for the French version of her Austro-Hungarian cake *Dobo*, renamed *French Doberge* and her recipe of lemon pie with meringue than for her Jewish pastry her strudels, carrot cake, cream cheese torte, German chocolate cake, traditional Jewish lebkuchen, (a cake composed with fruit nuts, raisins, ginger, cinnamon), all recipes being written in her cookbook.¹¹

Jewish cuisine under creole influence: creolisation

As we question Southern Jewish families, we notice that meals are more and more creolised and the respect of Southern habits, but with a slight touch of Sabbath practices. Ruth Dreyfous, whose grandfather Abel emigrated in 1836, a prominent New Orleans French family gave me a description of her Shabbath meal:

Friday night: light soup, always soup as hot it could be, fish and desserts. Sunday morning we had a hearty breakfast: grits, oysters. And then, for dinner at 2 pm, we had turkey, or chicken, salad, artichokes, and ice cream¹². »

Soup is served for Shabbath dinner. The Saturday night can also be composed with matzah balls kneidlach and chicken or pot au feu.

On Friday night the Dreyfous eat fish no meat, meat is « *treife* » (non casher). It is a very personal way of celebrating shabbath.

Sunday everything is permitted again: the « *grits* (fried with ham or bacon traditional Southern breakfast) oysters are no kosher.

Travelling up north near Baton Rouge in Saint Francisville, we can read about Saint Francisville Inn formerly known as the Wolf-Schlesinger House, circa 1880: his one-acre estate in the historic district features Victorian Gothic architecture and 100-year-old oak trees draped with moss.

The breakfast buffet includes an assortment of egg dishes, breads and muffins, grits, blintz, fruit and sausage.

¹¹ Maxine Wolchansky and Beulah Ledner., *Let's bake with Beulah Ledner, A Legendary New Orleans lady*, New Orleans, non daté, p. III. Merci à son fils Albert Ledner, architecte, de nous voir montré l'ancienne pâtisserie de Beulah Ledner construite par lui, devenue maintenant *French Maurice Pastry*.

¹² Interview with Ruth Dreyfous september 23 1992.

Nowadays

According to Marcie Cohen Ferris, Jewish food is specially made for Jewish holidays. Matzo balls and matzo charlotte for Passover, fried chicken, rice and gravy string beans, salad and ice cream in Vicksburg.

Some women kept their Southern and Jewish dishes separate while others blend their cuisine by adding pecans, fresh tomatoes, okra butter beans and sweet potatoes to their holiday menus, gumbo and beef ribs instead of the traditional roast chicken at Friday evening Sabbath supper.

Some families have only kept matzo balls. It was often the case for German and French Jews who cooked traditional dishes from their native lands but not specifically Jewish.

Bert Fishel who grew up in Vicksburg told that his grand mother mama Stella from Alsace was fond of cakes and meringues, loved strong cheese, sauerkraut, white asparagus and had a predilection for ham. Flo Geismar told me that for evening dinner they could eat potatoes and herrings with cream and that her father would even enjoy sharing a cooked rabbit with an Alsatian priest, a special from Alsace. She herself enjoyed Creole food, etouffée bisque she brought from Gonzales as well as boiled crawfish...

One member of Beulah's family, I met in 1994, Sylvia Marcus told me she would eat shrimp but her parents would never have pork and herself not really. She also mentioned: "When the children were little, we had bacon but we did not have a lot". "We also tried to have

something else than pork”. She herself doesn’t cook but she still bakes and she had a cook for 35 years. Her cook made “fish with court bouillon”. She baked herself “Matze Chaleth”, bread puddings with apple and cheese pies. She baked cherry and almond cakes.

Most of the French Jewish tradition has been lost. But her mother in law coming from Alsace used to cook Jewish carp and liver paté. For Jewish holidays: “we have dinner with meat and vegetables”.

As for kosher food, she mentioned that many orthodox people in New Orleans keep kosher in their house and they would go out to eat pork.

As a whole Pesach Jews are more respectful of the traditional foodways than Jews coming from France and Germany. Many religious families, once settled in the USA, have renegotiated details of their religious practices but have not question their basic identity.¹³

Rice, pecan pies, gumbo, became also part of Jewish food thanks their African American cooks serving in Jewish families. Rice was adopted by Jewish families. It can easily be shared.

As Flo Geimar explained to me in 1992, referring to her childhood in the 1930ies: « Rose was an African American cook. She was doing the cuisine most of the time and she had her own way of preparing dishes such as okra, vegetables, red beans. We did not watch her.

¹³ Sur ces subtiles divisions entre le dehors et le dedans des familles migrantes observantes, Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America, Italian, Jewish, Foodways in the age of migration*, Cambridge, (Mass), Harvard University Press, 2002, p.180-185.

Often she cooked more rice or potatoes and she brought them back home. Rice was inexpensive and we could add milk or gravy.¹⁴

Back to Kosher Creole Cuisine

Along with the new Kosher caterers, Jews or non Jews, Jewish returned to kosher, to more tradition. This dates back from 15 or 20 years.

Joel and Natalie Brown own a Kosher Cajun New York deli restaurant and a grocery in Metairie and an interviewee told me about them: "It has whatever you need and whenever he has not, he can order them". She seemed very happy about it.

For twenty years long, the Browns have served local and out-of-town customers seeking foods prepared using 100 percent kosher ingredients and Joel explained:"Growing up in a kosher home, I saw what New Orleans was lacking,: "I saw a need to bring more kosher products into the city and open up the market, not just to Jewish people, but also to others. Our largest growth is people who are eating kosher because of the high quality and healthy way the products are made." These days, they say that group includes a growing number of people who are discovering the health benefits of kosher cooking.

There is also a selection of foods that are "parve," a term signifying that they contain no meat or dairy. In addition to being important to kosher diets, parve foods (cakes, cookies, breads and more) have special appeal for vegetarians and those who are lactose intolerant.

¹⁴ Interview Flo Geismar Margolis September 231997 New Orleans.

In the French Carré, there were two Jewish restaurants but I don't know if they are kosher

There has been a real invention and imagination about the Jewish Food creole food thanks to two ladies.

It is the story of Milfred L. Covert and of Sylvia P. Gerson, I met Sylvia P. Gerson in 1997. The two cooks have been settled for thirty years in the South and have made their mind to make a creole kosher cuisine. Thanks to their sense of humour, their ingenuity, they have been acknowledged by Jewish authorities. They were truthful to the southern food too. The difficulty was to find kosher food in New Orleans 30 years ago.

“I wanted to keep a kosher house Sylvia Gerson told me. When I asked a recipe from someone it was always with ham or shrimp. So before I realized it, I converted into kosher. They say ham, I used corn beef or salami or sausages whatever. They say shrimp, I used tuna fish, I made a substitution. Therefore I became a kosher creole cook without realizing it at first. »¹⁵

Our two cooks learnt how to accommodate kosher cuisine to creole one while enforcing the creole foodways. They also associate the names of both cultures.

Two books, *Kosher Creole Cookbook* and *Kosher Southern-Style Cookbook* have been the result of their work, the first one 1982, the second one in 1992.

¹⁵ Sylvia Gerson, Entretien du 27 septembre 1997 à la Nouvelle Orléans.

Number of dishes comprising pork, shrimp, crawfish have been transformed into kosher food. But they have given names which combined Yiddish and Creole expressions in order to be recognized: « *Baked cheese grits* » are cooked with cheese and not bacon, Famous Antoine Rockefeller oysters became « *Oysters Moskavitz* » ou *Mockfeller* with tuna fish respecting the original recipe. Jambalaya prepared with sausages was made with veal and became, « *Veal Jambalaya*, crawfish étouffé, « *Spring Salom Etouffée* » (salmon for peace); the « *Poor Boy* popular New Orleans sandwich with ham or shrimp became corn beef with pickles. The traditional Jewish dish « *Gefilte Fish* » was renamed and became « *Fishballs with Encore Sauce* ». For Passover, the ladies advise « *Pass over Yam casserole* » (yams for Easter), « *Exodus Spicy squash* » (spiced orange juice for Exodus), *Afikomen Sparagus* (*matzot* for Seder) for Purim, Esther celebration, « *Pharaoh's ears* » (« *Amans's ears*), etc...

Both cuisine, creole and kosher are fairly different. They are uneasy to match together. To manage it, both cooks have made substitutions. But they have combined more than food; they have combined languages, English and Yiddish. Beyond two food ways, two cultures are facing. Their books must obey to kosher rites but also be conform to the Southern food and adapt to it.

Our two cooks have made a real work of invention and imagination and connection between two cultures .The transformation of kosher food into Creole kosher one reaffirms their belonging to both identities. Moreover, Creole and Jewish foodways have combined

(intertwined) two distant cultures and at the same time, food and identity.

Food is good to think as I have stated at the beginning.

Creole and Jewish recipes given by Joes's mother

Grillades

1 1/2 pounds round steak, cut in to approximately 2 inch squares

1 cup flour seasoned with pepper and garlic powder to taste

Pound the flour mixture into the steak until steak is flattened. Brown in oil in iron pot. Remove steak from pot.

Sauce, as follows:

1 1/2 cup chopped onion

1/2 cup chopped celery

1/2 cup chopped green pepper

1 large can (about 28 oz) crushed tomatoes

1 cup water

1 teaspoon vinegar

Cook sauce on low heat about 30 minutes. Add meat, cover and simmer for about 1 hour or until the meat is tender. Serve over grits, couscous or noodles.

Matzo Farfel Stuffing

1/4 cup butter or margarine
3 cups chicken broth
2 medium onions, chopped
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
12 ounce box matzo farfel
1 large apple, peeled and chopped
3 eggs beaten
salt to taste
paprika

Put broth, butter, onion, celery, parsley and seasoning in a pot and simmer about 15 minutes, until vegetables are just tender. Stir in farfel and let cool a few minutes. Add the apple and beaten egg stirring thoroughly until mixed. Put in a lighted oiled 9X13 baking dish, sprinkle with paprika if desired and bake at 325 degrees for 30-40 minutes until set.

Noodle Kugel

1/4 pound noodles
1 ounce cooking oil
2 small tart apples, peeled and chopped

1 cup pecans, chopped fine
2 beaten eggs
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup raisins

Cook noodles and drain. Add eggs. Coat baking dish with oil. Combine sugar, cinnamon, nuts and apples, mixing well. Combine with noodle/egg mixture and stir well. Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees.

Shrimp Etouffee

1/4 cup cooking oil
1 onion chopped
1 green pepper chopped
1 stalk celery chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1/4 cup water
1 pound shrimp, cleaned and peeled
salt and pepper to taste
garlic to taste (1 or 2 pods minced)
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped green onions

Saute onion, green pepper and celery in oil until tender. Add tomato paste and cook 25 minutes. Add water and cook 15 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook 20 minutes until shrimp are done. Be careful not to cook too long as shrimp will be tough if overcooked.

Courtboullion

5 pounds firm white fish

1 cup water

1 cup cooking oil

1 large onion, chopped

1 green pepper, chopped

1 can tomato paste plus one can water

1 cup dry wine (usually use Sherry)

6 stalks celery, chopped

Small bunch green onions, chopped

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

good hand full of parsley chopped

6 bay leaves

Basil totaste

1/4 teaspoon oregano

Cut fish into cubes about 2 inches. Saute onions, celery, green pepper until soft. Add tomato paste and the can of water. Add remaining

ingredients, EXCEPT fish and simmer 2 hours at low temperature.
Add fish and cook additional 20 minutes. Serve over rice.

Stuffed Mirliton

6 mirliton (chayote squash)
1/2 cup green onion, chopped
1/2 cup celery, chopped
3-4 parsely sprigs, chopped
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/2 stick butter
1 pound uncooked peeled shrimp
3 slices day old bread soaked in water
1/2 to 1 cup bread crumbs

Boil mirlitons until tender and cool. Scoop out pulp and mash. Saute remaining vegetables in butter until tender. Add shrimp and cook 5 minutes. Add mirliton pulp and bread and cook 5 minutes. Place in a greased baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes after sprinkling with bread crumbs.

Chicken Soup

3-4 pound chicken, skinned and cut in to pieces
2 onion, cut up
4 stalks celery, chopped
5-6 carrots, sliced

good hand full of parsley, chopped
6 ounces of Chicken Bouvril (or bouillon)

Add all ingredients to 4 quarts water in a large soup pot and simmer for one hour.

Remove chicken, debone and return meat to pot. Add just a pinch of cinnamon.

You may also add noodles or matzo balls and simmer until they are done (according to the directions on the matzo meal box).

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