

A Great Gumbo

Gumbo isn't that just Jambalaya? Gumbo is not the same as Jambalaya, the main difference is the use of rice in each dish. Gumbo is a soup or stew over rice while Jambalaya is cooked with the rice in the dish. Gumbo should be less rice than liquid and Jambalaya should not be mushy or liquid.

Gumbo is a Cajun and Creole specialty throughout the state of Louisiana. Gumbo is a stew made from seafood, meat, or vegetables that is served over hot rice. It can be made thicker with okra, filé, or a roux. The best part about Gumbo is that it can be made with an almost endless mix of proteins.

Gumbo can feed a crowd and will have both meat and seafood. The meat can include chicken and sausage and their drippings, as well as shrimp. Gumbo can use filé, which is made from dried and ground sassafras tree leaves; it will thicken and season at the same time.

Chicken and Andouille Gumbo is made with a roux that uses andouille sausage and chicken drippings until it is a light golden-brown color. Roux is a mixture of equal parts of flour and fat cooked together and used to thicken sauces. It then cooks down with the mirepoix, okra, and garlic. This helps to achieve a balance between flavor and thickening agent.

Vegetable Gumbo is made with black-eyed peas and kale. It also contains soy sauce, smoked paprika, and the holy trinity (onions, green peppers, and celery).

Pulled Chicken Gumbo is made with chicken drippings mixed with flour to make a dark roux. This gives a savory, toasty flavor and a cream texture. When the roux starts to smell like roasted peanuts you know you have cooked it long enough. Be patient, this could take up to 15 minutes.

Big Batch Andouille Gumbo is one that you can freeze the extra into easy-to-thaw servings and it features andouille sausage and uses okra to thicken it.

Slow-Cooker Freezer Pack Gumbo is a short-cut gumbo recipe that avoids the roux step (that can be time-consuming) and uses a small bit of rice to thicken that stew as it cooks low and slow with a Cajun spice blend. It can be served over rice or with a crusty bread.

Ten Commandments of Gumbo

What goes into a gumbo varies as much as the cook making it, but there are a few rules to keep in mind.

1. Thou Shalt Never Use Tomatoes. Gumbo is roux-based and not tomato-based.
2. Thou Shalt Not Use Un-Cajun Sausage.
3. Thou Shalt Not Use Store-Bought Roux.

4. Thou Shalt Always Use a Bowl.
5. Thou Shalt Only Use a Wooden Spoon.
6. Thou Shalt Adhere to the “Gumbo-to-Rice” Ratio. This means 2 parts gumbo to 1 part rice.
7. Thou Shalt Always Keep Filé in Ya Cabinet.
8. Thou Shalt Not Mix Chicken & Sausage with Seafood. There is Chicken and Sausage Gumbo and there is Seafood Gumbo. Leave them separate.
9. Thou Shalt Never Tell People Where the Potato Salad Goes. This is a personal choice, leave this discussion out of the kitchen.
10. Though Shalt Always Stir Your Gumbo Counter-Clockwise.

The flavors in gumbo are nothing short of incredible! This heartwarming staple is the epitome of comfort food. Find a gumbo recipe to create a perfect, cozy weeknight or special occasion meal!

(Sources: www.marthastewart.com; www.foodnetwork.com; www.episcopalplace.org)