

Louisiana's Award Winning Recipes Cookbook © 2002
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Try Louisiana Cooking with this Fun Collection of Authentic Recipes

Do you love Southern home-cooked foods? If you've ever been to Louisiana, you know that there's nothing like the flavors that come from that historic State. Cooking in the Louisiana tradition is close to my heart since all of my family comes from Louisiana. That's why I love to collect cookbooks of Louisiana recipes. So it was a natural for me to pick up the Louisiana's Award-Winning Recipes Cookbook, by Missy Armstrong, Dottie Brewer and Harrietta Randazzo. If you're looking for simple to prepare, real home-cooking, tasty recipes, you'll enjoy this compact cookbook.

Louisiana is known for rich, savory dishes and this collection of award-winning recipes by home cooks presents a good variety of dishes to explore. The Louisiana Award-Winning Cookbook, is comprised mainly from a collection of recipes that were submitted to the New Orleans Times Picayune Newspaper for a contest to see who could cook up the best recipes. The authors say this book contains award-winning recipes from Louisiana "that reveal methods of preparing the dishes that were kept secret for generations."

One thing for sure, you have to love rich, high-fat foods to really enjoy authentic Louisiana cooking. The recipes in this cookbook carry on that tradition and do not bend to the rules to meet any contemporary diet craze. For example, the "Everyday Country Cornbread" lists Gold Metal self-rising flour and 2 tablespoons of Crisco butter-flavored shortening with the option to use plain Crisco shortening in the ingredients.

Another example is the "Surprise Chicken Kiev" that calls for 2 teaspoons of Tony Chachere's Creole seasoning to flavor the pounded chicken breasts. You might need to substitute these types of ingredients with something more accessible or fitting to your diet choices. However, if you can stick as close as possible to the recipe, you will have a great experience of the basic flavor and zest of the authentic Louisiana dish.

For the most part, the ingredients used are readily available and I tried several of the dishes in my kitchen as a treat for my family. The "Spicy Okra Puffs" were easy to prepare and added just a bit of heat on the tongue with the addition of Tabasco Sauce in the mixture. My family enjoyed the "Steak au Poivre" dish for Sunday dinner that was marinated in a cup of dry Vermouth which tenderized the meat and added to the simple flavors, another little known tradition of Louisiana cooking.

You'll find some dishes for special occasions that you might have wondered how to prepare such as the "New Orleans Cajun Fried Turkey" with Cajun Injection Seasoning, or the "Golden Glazed Rock Cornish Hens" with a homemade golden glaze.

The cookbook does not have an index which means you have to skim whole sections to find a recipe. But the short chapters make it easy to find what you need. Although the book is not too large, it provides a full range of dishes to try, from appetizers and dips to beverages, vegetables, meats and desserts.

I like this cookbook. Good recipes from this region are a treat and it's even better when you find no-frills recipes that come from the home kitchen of cooks from the area. Louisiana's Award-Winning Recipes represents a labor of love that will be a welcome addition to the shelves of cooks who love Louisiana foods.

Reviewer: Consuelo S. Meux, Ph.D.

<http://www.consuelomeux.com>