

The Exciting Tastes, Sights and Sounds of N'awlins

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Dining out in N'awlins is seen as a joyous social event, not only for the visitor but for the locals as well. In New Orleans, food is seen as one of the most important attractions, not just as nourishment but as a wonderful way of life! Some of the most famous restaurants in the world are located in this historic city. It's no wonder why.

Here are some of the special terms that turn up in the local menus:

N'AWLINS (NEW ORLEANS) CUISINE DICTIONARY

ANDOUILLE (ahn-doo-ye) A plump and spicy country sausage often found in red beans and rice.

BEIGNET (ben-yay) Square shaped hole-less doughnuts, sprinkled with powdered sugar. Some of the best are found at the famous 24-hour Cafe Du-Monde in the historic French market.

BOUDIN (boo-dan) Hot spicy pork mixed with onions, rice and herbs stuffed in a sausage casing.

CAFE AU LAIT (cafay-oh-lay) 1/2 and 1/2 mixture of hot coffee and milk, N'awlins style coffee is often laced with chicory, a dried and roasted herb.

CAFE BRULOT (cafay-broo-lo) A dramatic after dinner treat of coffee, spices, orange peel and liqueurs, served ignited with a flourish in special cups.

CRAWFISH (craw-fish) Also known as "mud-bugs" to the locals, these tiny lobster-like critters are found in many cajun dishes.

DIRTY RICE A cooked rice mixture sauteed with green peppers, onion, celery and giblets.

ETOUFEE (ay-too-fay) A succulent tangy tomato based sauce, local specialties are crawfish or shrimp etoufee.

FILE (fee-lay) A seasoning made of ground saffras leaves.

GUMBO A thick, robust soup, which every restaurant serves their own version of.

JAMBALAYA (jum-bo-lie-yah) A delicious concoction of rice, tomatoes, ham, shrimp, chicken, vegetables, cajun seasonings.

MUFFULETTA (moof-a-letta) A N'awlins version of a sandwich, filled with meats, cheeses, pickles and olive salad stuffed between two thick buns.

PRALINE (praw-leen) A N'awlins traditional confection of sugar and pecans in a patty shape.

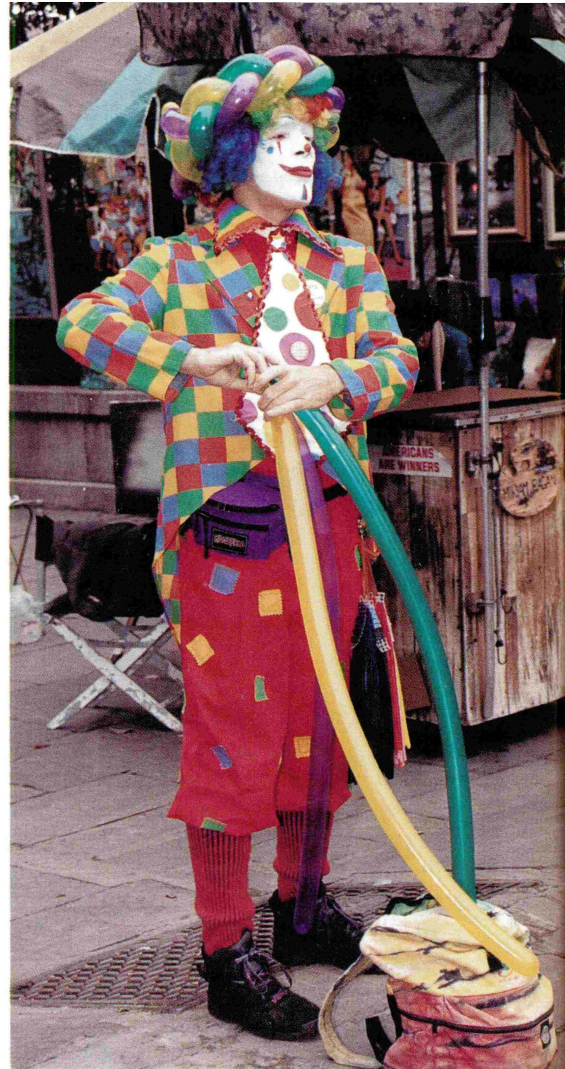
PO-BOY A N'awlins version of the sub/hero/grinder, crusty French bread filled with oysters, roast beef and gravy, soft-shelled crab or meats and cheeses.

RED BEANS & RICE This is one of the staples of cajun cooking. Kidney beans, rice and big hunks of andouille sausage served with lots of seasonings and spices. This is traditionally eaten on Mondays (and any other day you get a hankerin' for it!)

The Cajuns and the Creoles

Creoles are not Cajuns, and Cajuns are not Creoles. Both groups are French in their descent, dating back for centuries, but that is where the similarity ends.

Strictly speaking, a New Orleans Creole is a descendant of an early French or Spanish settler, born "in the colony" not in Europe. The French dominated their cultural and social life for more than 100 years. Most Creoles



Clowning around at Jackson Square.

called themselves "French," spoke French and considered themselves true natives. Americans arrived after the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and were considered foreigners and called Les Americains.

When New Orleans was founded in 1718, Creoles were cosmopolitan, city dwellers and Cajuns were the rustic, self-sufficient country dwellers. The Cajuns lived close to the land, amid the bayous and the swamps, happily removed from city life. They were hunters and trappers, farmers and fishermen who worked hard during the week and enjoyed their weekends! "Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler" (Let the Good Times Roll) has always been part of their philosophy. They proudly retained their customs, religion and their own form of the French language, "Patois" (pat-wa). Patois has been passed down orally for three centuries dating back to Brittany and Normandy. Cajun French has almost disappeared but their distinctively accented English and Cajun idioms prevail, as do their music, food and customs. ➔



Ye olde horse and carriage. This is transport the old fashioned way but it's a lot of fun. It is a pleasant way to see the sights.