



Cooking and Entertaining Book



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INTRODUCTION

Since the time of Fanny Farmer in Boston, up through Fanny Craddock in England, to today's 30 Minute Semi-Homemade Meals, popular chefs have wanted to make cooking easier for the masses. Julia Child translated the militaristic precision of Escoffier's French kitchen into something attainable by a housewife with gee-whiz labor-saving modern appliances like the electric stand mixer and food processor. Ina Garten, half a century later, taught us how to do Julia Child's Art of French Cooking in an easier, more rustic approach.

When it comes to recipe books like this, the conversation often turns into ways to cut down on time and labor. This is all fine and good in some areas of labor—nobody needs to hand beat egg whites to a stiff peak when you could use a stand mixer instead! But, there is a certain quality of taste that comes from labor. It's the deep, dark, sweet heartiness of Nana's Sunday red gravy. Abuela's pollo mole tastes as much of the spices and chocolate as it does of the time she spent tending, toasting, crushing and mixing each item perfectly, each step of the way in the recipe. Imagine those old Creole chefs who have been working at Mother's Cafeteria for generations—strong women standing over a pan of roux, making sure it's browned perfectly, and then browning the onions in that dark roux, and reducing the homemade stock that's added to the pot. There's an undeniable richness imbued into food by focused labor. That's the taste of love, and you can't semi-home make that!

This cookbook will teach you how to bring forth this flavor. Many dishes in this book, from Violette's gumbo to Elaine's vindaloo, will not be as good without a good bit of attention. But along the way, we'll show you tricks to cut down on the hardest parts of developing the rich flavor —like making large quantities of roux in the oven, to spoon into your next crawfish étouffée. The labor of love in the kitchen centers on knowing how to perfect each ingredient, each step of the way in a recipe. Sometimes this means layering flavors and seasoning throughout the dish, or effectively using wine and spirits to bring amplified flavors. This book will teach you how to love your food. We promise.

The labor of love that centers around perfecting a recipe is just as detailed a task now as it was when your great, great grandmother first picked up a wooden spatula. But you have an ally, which you hold in your hands. You have the experience of chef's past, who will teach you in their wisdom how to create a dish that will not only wow and impress but will transform the way you view taste.

We invite you to embark on a culinary journey, and we are delighted to present to you the Magnolia Bayou Cookbook.

P.S. Don't forget about entertaining! While we believe entertaining is more of a personal style a host or hostess must discover, we've included a few tips to help you entertain in style. Don't miss Kitty Conway's section on catering—she provides many valuable lessons. And speaking of style, we would be remiss if we didn't come out and say it: We believe in being *recherché*. *Fines*. *Sprezzatura*. *Exquisite*. Whatever you want to call it, Magnolia Bayou is all about doing it very well.

ABOUT THE OLD CRAB

Vernon Calhoun built one of the first houses in Magnolia Bayou and opened the community's first grocery store. He worked in an upstairs office at the A&P, overlooking the registers. Vernon worked there six days a week (he only closed the store to teach Sunday school, where the children called him "The Old Crab"), every single day until he died at age 96 in 2008. He listened to talk radio all day long and was known to enjoy a good conspiracy theory. From 1992-1996, Vernon wore a specially made radio wave-proof hat that he purchased from Rush Limbaugh's mail-order catalog. Despite his peculiarities, Vernon was a good man at heart and a pillar of the community. He wrote the community ordinance banning disposable plates, flatware and cups—even though he could have sold them at his store, the crying Indian commercial for the Keep America Beautiful campaign always got Vernon riled up. Whenever Vernon got very excited about something—whether from listening to Rush, seeing a good commercial, or maybe being just a bit drunk—he would yell out very ... colorful ... sayings. Some of them were life advice. Others were imaginary grocery slogans. Or observations on the human condition. Or sometimes they made absolutely no sense. We've collected some of our favorites that we remember Vernon saying. We hope you enjoy all these great life lessons from The Old Crab.



ABOUT MAGNOLIA BAYOU

This magnificent planned community was opened in 1975 by William “Tico” Ticonderoga Jones, after more than a decade developing this beautiful land. Originally the location of the family farm, Magnolia Bayou had been in the Jones family since after the Civil War. The low-lying 600-acre property would change daily with the tides, making the area quite challenging to farm. Marshall Providence Jones, Tico's great, great grandfather discovered that the curious “Habanesco Pepper” (a cross between a tabasco and a habanero) loved the swampy soil. And Southerners loved the hot sauce the farm produced from the peppers. By the end of his lifetime, Marshall Providence Jones was producing enough Habanesco Hot Sauce to put a bottle on every table in the South.

Tico sold the rights for Habanesco sauce to the McCormick company, which moved production of the pepper to an entire city in South Louisiana. With no farm on Magnolia Bayou to operate any more, Tico set out to develop the property into an upscale country club which would be open to people of all races, religions, and nationalities—quite a controversial idea for mid-20th century America! With a single backhoe, and a knowledge of the contours of Magnolia Bayou, Tico single handedly dug all of the canals that drained Magnolia Bayou to reclaim land to build homes, a world-class golf course, and the South's most exclusive country club. Tico inherently understood the need for sustainable drainage of Magnolia Bayou, so he left 50 acres in the lowest area undrained by canals and built his home on a small hill overlooking this tidal basin. Today, its Magnolia Bayou's smallest house on the largest lot.

The first residents to move into Magnolia Bayou were friends of Tico's wife, Hattie Mae, who was an internationally-renowned opera singer. While Tico was building canals, Hattie Mae would tour the great opera houses of San Francisco, Barcelona, New Orleans, Sydney, Vienna, Prague, and more ... always regaling people with tales of the beauty of Magnolia Bayou where she always returned. Her energy attracted an eclectic, cosmopolitan mix of people from around the world. Today, Magnolia Bayou is known as the “Singapore of the South”—an eclectic mix of world leaders from disparate cultures, converged on one small bit of land.

Habanesco peppers still grow wild all over Magnolia Bayou. The plant produces a intoxicating fragrance evocative of spicy ginger and pink peppercorns, which perfumes the entire area. One of the side effects this smell

produces is of the greatest benefit for Magnolia Bayou—no mosquitos! The Habanescos ward off the blood suckers, meaning you can enjoy the outdoors any time of the year, day or night, without being eaten alive.

P.S. Habanescos ceased production in 1994 when a hurricane permanently washed away McCormick's farms. A recipe re-creating this hot sauce can be found in our Sauces and Sides section.

ABOUT THE LADIES AUXILIARY

The mission of the Magnolia Bayou Country Club Ladies Auxiliary is multifaceted and reflects the needs of our wondrous community.

First, and foremost, the Ladies Auxiliary exists to promote volunteerism, which makes for more vibrant community with engaged citizens. We consider ourselves a training school for volunteers, and all active members must justify their membership through continued service to Magnolia Bayou and our world-class country club.

Second, the Ladies Auxiliary defines the taste and style of Magnolia Bayou, which is the South's most cosmopolitan community. We believe it to be our duty to capture the beauty and charm of our great community through projects like this cookbook you hold right now.

Finally, the Ladies Auxiliary provides for social engagement in Magnolia Bayou, and through promoting social exchange among the community, thus creates a more beautiful society.



COME SEE WHY MAGNOLIA
BAYOU IS THE PLACE TO LIVE!

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MAGNOLIA BAYOU



Antebellum Homes
Modern Condominiums
Flourishing Parks
Crystal Blue Waters
Fine Dining Experiences
Southern Comforts

RECHERCHÉ

By Violette Gautier

In the patois of New Orleans Creoles, we have a wonderful word that we all live By Recherché.

For the rest of the French-speaking world, this word simply means “research,” something you might associate with a college term paper. But in New Orleans, the word means hand-selected. Exquisite. Done with care. To be recherché, something must be created with every detail in mind, and an eye towards perfecting each aspect. But there is an ease to it. Food that is recherché tastes beautiful. The shrimp remoulade at Gallatoire's is perfectly recherché—the shock of bright red shrimp in a paprika sauce, set against only the greenest and freshest leaves of iceberg, and set upon a dainty white plate. Every detail, from the quality of the ingredients, to the way they are cooked, and especially the way they are arranged ... everything is done just so as to be as perfect as possible.

Please don't think recherché means buying the most expensive food and having the most complicated gadgetry to cook with. Anyone can be recherché—all it takes is just a bit more care. Look at each detail of the food and examine every step its preparation from cutting board to plate. How do you make choices that bring out the best of your meal, each step in the process of making it? When you learn how to always make choices that only bring out the best in your food, then you are recherché.

Here are some examples of recherché:

If you make a velvety, pure-white vichyssoise, you don't want to finish it with black pepper! This would look like specs of dirt in your exquisite soup. That would not be recherché. Instead, use white pepper, which will add a delightful floral piquancy, and blend in to the white canvas of the soup.

My good friend, Duquesa Infanta Maria Teresa Pontabla de Barcelona y Andorra, will tell you that the skins of tomatoes and peppers are annoying bits that detract from the immaculacy of a dish. Those little specs of indigestible fiber create an unpleasant mouthfeel and can upset the stomach. This is not recherché at all! Whenever possible, remove the skins from tomatoes and peppers before serving. This can be done by fire roasting and peeling the skin off or running a puree through a fine strainer and removing the pulp. Such smooth and elegant textures are a sign of a recherché touch.

Recherché can refer to the quality of your ingredients, but that doesn't always equate to buying the priciest ingredients. In summertime, when the sun bakes the swamps all day and you can barely breathe for the heat, a dead-ripe watermelon (taken from a brief rest in the deep freeze) is just about as recherché as you can get. I knew a woman who would wait until the shrimpers came in with their afternoon haul until she bought her seafood for that evening's boil. Such freshness is very recherché.

I truly believe anyone can be recherché. Even if you don't go in for fussiness in the kitchen, you can still make sure your ingredients are always the freshest possible and arrange them as to bring out their best elements.

Throughout this book you'll find tips on how to be recherché. From learning the best way to slice an onion, to plating your dish as neatly as possible—these tips will add a touch of effortless elegance that will always impress your guests.