

IN GOOD TASTE PRESS

THE FIRST COAST

Heritage COOKBOOK

CELEBRATING
THE RICH
CULINARY
INFLUENCE
IN
NORTHEAST
FLORIDA



FROM
ST. AUGUSTINE
TO
JACKSONVILLE
AND THE
ST. JOHNS
RIVER

14,000 BC TO 1821

WRITTEN BY JEFFREY SPEAR

Illustration courtesy of the State Archives of Florida



THE FIRST COAST HERITAGE COOKBOOK is a collection of recipes influenced by the ingredients and foodways of the Indigenous Indians as well as the Spanish, French, British and African settlers who inhabited the First Coast from 14,000 BC [the time archeologists tell us evidence of human habitation first appears] to 1821 [when Florida becomes a U.S. Territory].

What's surprising is how many of the foods we take for granted today did not exist prior to the arrival of European explorers and settlers. Imagine a world without pork, oranges, bananas, sugar, peaches and sweet potatoes [Spanish contributions] or



apples, cherries, beef and white potatoes [British] or okra, watermelon, yams and peanuts [African]. Ultimately, the style of cooking we enjoy as Southern cuisine today is the delicious and enduring legacy of these early settlers.

BEAR HEAD HASH [serves 8]

Although bears are a protected species today, they were plentiful and considered a staple food source by Indians and European settlers. This dish was originally prepared using the animal's head. It would be cooked and stripped of its meat, then chopped and fried in fat along with vegetables and seasoning. While you could still make this recipe with bear meat that is legally harvested, this configuration allows you to use whatever protein

INGREDIENTS

- 3 T olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded, cut into 1/4 inch dice
- 1/2 lb beef, pork, or chicken, fully cooked, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 2 lb potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 2 T chopped parsley
- 1/4 tsp cayenne
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 8 eggs

DIRECTIONS

Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying or sauté pan. Add the onion, red and green peppers and cook until soft, approximately 15 minutes. Add in the potatoes and meat followed by the parsley, cayenne, salt and pepper. Flatten the mixture into the pan, cooking 15 to 20 minutes longer, ensuring potatoes are fully cooked. Toss at least once while cooking, obtaining a crusty brownness to the meat and potatoes.

While the hash is cooking, prepare eggs [fried, poached, scrambled, etc.] to your liking.

Distribute the crusty hash equally onto eight plates; top with one portion of egg. Serve immediately.

THE FIRST COAST HERITAGE COOKBOOK

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