



Culinary Institute
of America

Cuisines of the Americas

Day 2: The American South

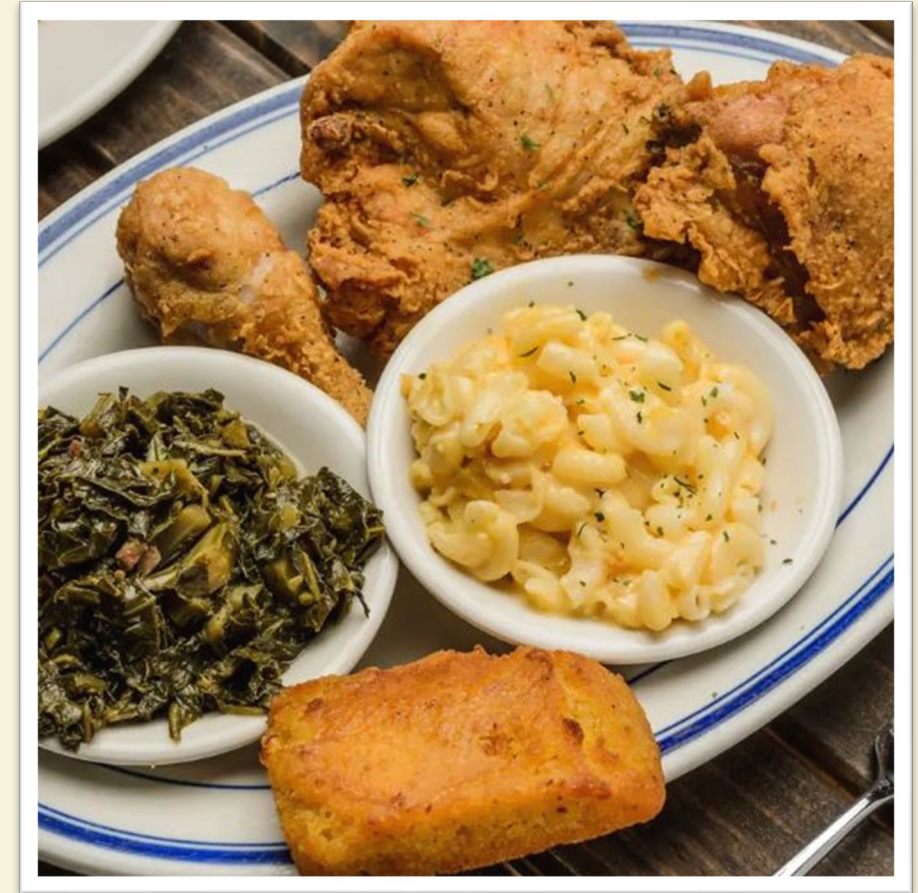


Learning Objectives

- Explain the historical and traditional influences of the cuisines of the American South, Gulf Coast, and New Orleans.
- Recognize the influence of African slaves on the cuisine of the American South.
- Distinguish the origin and characteristics of Cajun and Creole cuisine.
- Describe the steps involved in barbecuing.
- List the regional styles of barbecue available across the USA and state characteristics of each.
- Identify popular foods from the American South.
- Execute your daily production within the class time frame.

Cuisine of the American South

- Rich flavors, hearty comfort food
- Farm-fresh produce, locally sourced meats, and freshly caught seafood
- Cooking methods passed down through generations
- Slow cooking, smoking, frying
- Lots of sugar, salt, and fat
- Wide range of regional variations, each with distinct characteristics



Influences on Southern Cuisine

- **Native America:** tomatoes, squash, corn, hominy, grits, deep-pit BBQ
- **West Africa:** black-eyed peas, okra, eggplant, sesame, sorghum, melons, rice, spices, one-pot stewing
- **Caribbean:** red beans + rice, plantain, jerk seasoning, citrus, coconut
- **France:** foundation cooking techniques: sautéing, braising, roux, mirepoix, butter, gumbo
- **Spain:** jambalaya, spices, peppers, onions
- **Holland:** pancakes, waffles, doughnuts, cookies, coleslaw, pretzels
- **Germany:** chicken and dumplings, sausages, potato salad,
- **Britain/ Scotland:** full breakfast, pork



The Atlantic Slave Trade

- Europeans established a coastal slave trade in the 15th century.
- Trade to the Americas lasted from the 16th to 19th century.
- An estimated 10-12 million people were enslaved, mostly from Central and West Africa.
- Slaves worked on coffee, tobacco, cocoa, sugar, and cotton plantations, mines, rice fields, construction, cutting timber, and as servants.
- Slaves were considered property, with no rights. Children of slaves would also be slaves.

The Atlantic Slave Trade



African Influence on Southern Cuisine

Generations of African slaves created and passed down unique culinary traditions.

Many foods enjoyed today have roots in enslaved peoples' toil, tradition, and creativity.

BBQ: developed the art of the BBQ and innovations in curing, smoking, and sauce

Spices: traditional African cooking used a powerful mixture of hot spices

Cornbread: inspired by Native American techniques, developed many ways to prepare corn

Greens: gathered and boiled collards, kale, beet and turnip greens, flavored with low-quality cuts of meat



Cajun and Creole Cuisine

Louisiana regional cuisine featuring bold flavors, expert use of spices, love of seafood

Cajun:

- Rustic "Country food"
- Acadians from Canada who settled in the bayous and swamps of southwest Louisiana

Creole:

- High Brow "City food"
- Original European (esp. French and Spanish) settlers of New Orleans

Cajun Cuisine

- Smoked/ cured meat: Andouille/ boudin sausage, smoked ham hock, tasso
- Fresh-water crawfish
- Rarely include tomatoes
- Roux made with lard/ oil + flour
- Cook and serve meals in one large pot
- Concept of "spice as a flavor"
- Bold use of cayenne pepper, paprika, garlic, onion powder, filé powder
- Cajun gumbo, crawfish boil, dirty rice



Creole Cuisine



- New Orleans “city food”
- French, Spanish, African, Native fusion
- European methods: roux from butter + flour, cream, butter, court bouillon
- Tomatoes bring acidity and brightness, balance richness of meats, spices
- Fresh Gulf coast seafood
- Complex combination of spices, herbs, aromatics
- Careful balance of sweet, savory, spicy
- Less cayenne pepper, filé powder
- Gumbo, jambalaya, crawfish étouffée

Gumbo

Creole Gumbo

- Includes tomatoes
- More like a soup
- Richer flavor, reddish color
- More varied seafood

Cajun Gumbo

- No tomatoes
- More like a stew
- Darker, earthier flavor
- Chicken, sausage, shrimp



Filé Powder

- Herbal powder made from dried, ground leaves of sassafras tree
- First used in cooking by the Native American Choctaw tribe
- Cajuns used it as a thickener and flavoring for soups, stews, gumbos
- Distinctive, earthy flavor and texture
- Usually added after the vegetables and meats or seafood are finished cooking, removed from the heat



BBQ Definition

- Large cuts of tough, inexpensive meat
 - Beef brisket
 - Pork shoulder
- Cooked in a closed pit
- Indirect heat (away from the fire)
- Low heat (225°F - 250°F)
- Smoke encouraged/ required
- Long cooking time breaks down tissues
- Charcoal or hardwood fuel
 - Wood chips added for extra flavor



BBQ: Method

1. Pre-preparation: rub/ brine/ marinate meat
2. Prepare fire with charcoal or hardwood
 - Arrange coals for indirect heat
 - Reduce to desired temperature (225°F - 250°F)
3. Cook the meat
 - Arrange meat for indirect cooking
 - Maintain fire at desired temperature
 - Add wood chips for smoke and flavor (optional)
 - Baste with sauce (optional)
4. Slice/ pull/ chop the meat
5. Sauce (optional)

Marinades and Brines

Marinades

- Contain oils, acids, and aromatics
- Adds flavor, moisture, and color

Brines

- Contain water, salt, sugar, and aromatics
- Add moisture to naturally dry meats



Rubs



Dry Rubs

- Mixture of salt, sugar, herbs, spices, etc.

Wet Rubs

- Dry rub mixed with a little oil, vinegar, wine, citrus juice, etc. to form a paste

Smoking

Why is smoke applied to meats?

- Traditionally for preservation
- Create better overall flavors and aromas
- Tenderizes meats that would normally be too tough to eat



Smoking Methods

Cold Smoke

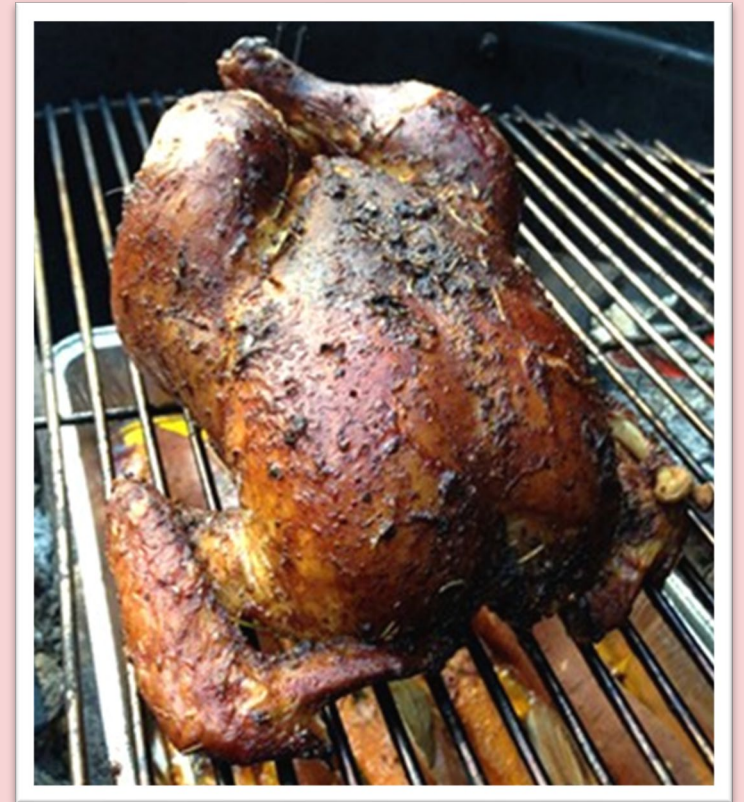
- < 100°F
- Finished product has a raw texture
- Cure or brine required
- Pellicle
- Smoke to desired color and flavor

Hot Smoke

- < 250°F
- Cure, brine, rub are optional
- Smoke until tender or to desired temperature

Smoke-Roasting

- Hybrid between grilling and roasting
- High heat – roasting range 350°F+
- Used for tender items like pork loin, beef tenderloin, poultry.
- Imparts smoke flavor and appearance to a roasted product
- Can be performed on gas and charcoal grills
- Brines, rubs, and mops can be applied



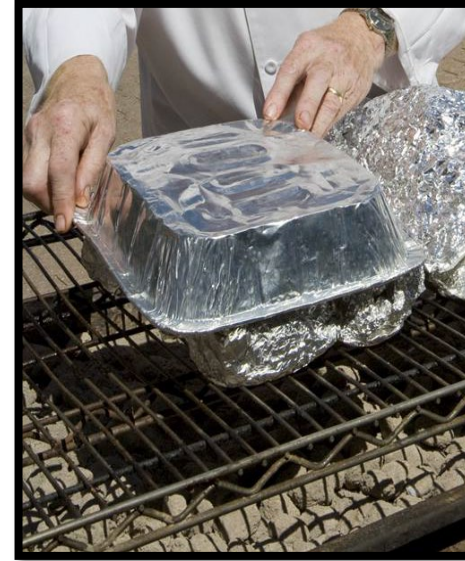
Smoking: Equipment

Requirements:

- Box to hold smoke and product
- Smoke source

Possibilities:

- Stove top/aluminum pans
- Old refrigerator
- Charcoal water smoker
- Electric smokers
- BBQ pits



BBQ: Regional Styles



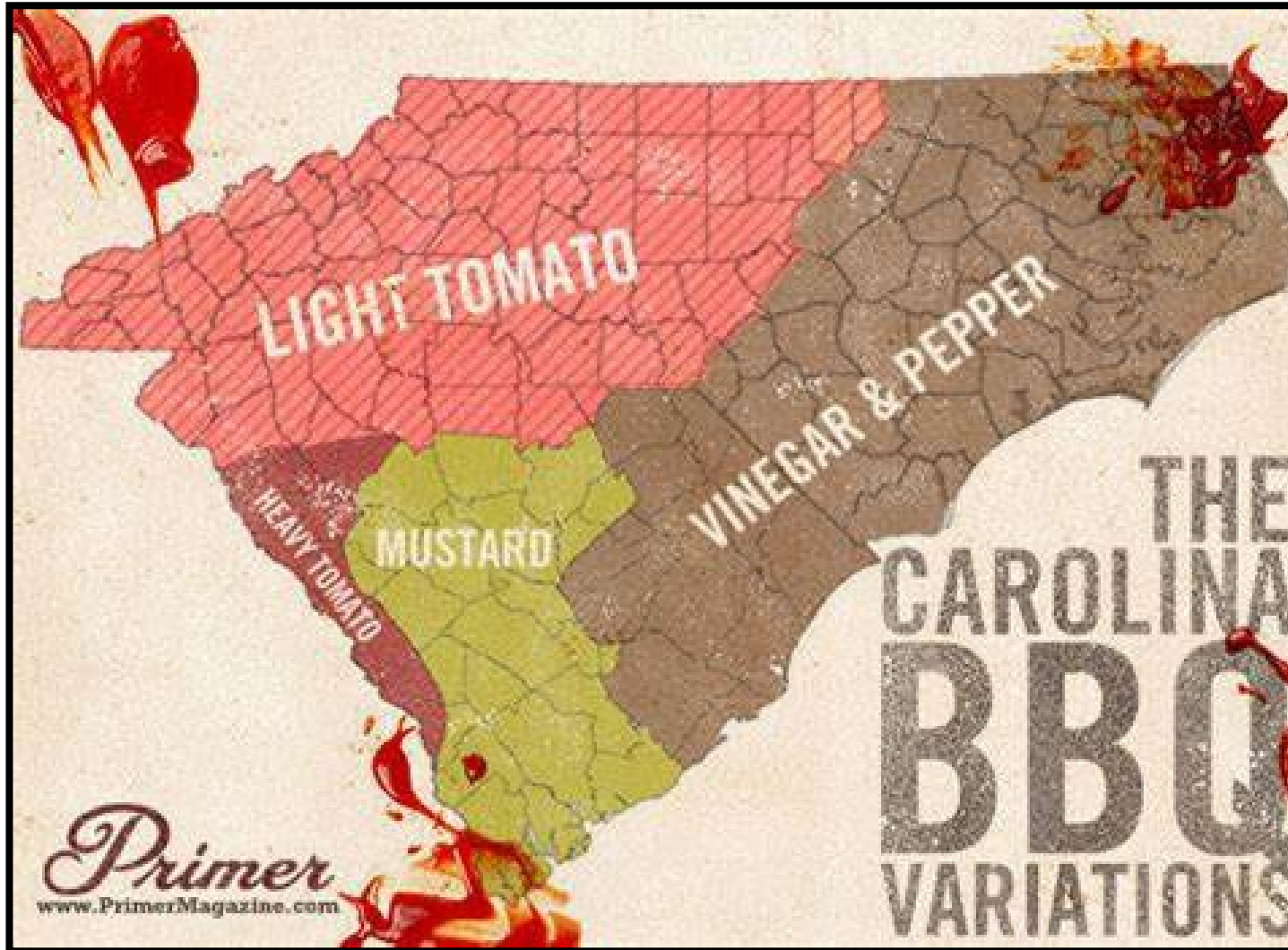
- Texas
- Kansas City
- Memphis
- North Carolina
 - East
 - West
- South Carolina
- Alabama
- Kentucky

Carolina BBQ

- Slow-cooked, smoked pork
- Whole hog, Pork butt, or shoulder
- Four regional sauces: tangy, vinegar-based
- "Pulled pork"
 - Cooked low and slow with smoke
 - Shredded or "pulled" by hand
- Often served with coleslaw on a bun
- Traditional sides: coleslaw, hushpuppies, collards, mac and cheese, baked beans



Carolina BBQ Sauces



- **Eastern North Carolina:** vinegar based with spices including red and black pepper
- **Western North Carolina:** adds ketchup
- **South Carolina:** tangy, yellow mustard-based

Memphis BBQ



- Mostly spareribs or baby back ribs
- Cooked dry (no glaze)
- Can be braised before grilling
- Thinner sauce
- Served 2 ways:
 - **Dry:** no sauce, extra rub
 - **Wet:** slathered with sauce just before serving

Alabama BBQ

- Pork cooked in open pits over hickory, oak, pecan hardwoods
- Unique white sauce made with mayonnaise, vinegar, vinegar, lemon juice, cayenne, horseradish
 - Commonly used with chicken
 - Brushed on in last 5 minutes of cooking



Southern Foods

Turnip/ Collard/ Mustard Greens

- Green vegetable, dark green, fanlike leaves
- Tough stems trimmed before cooking
- Do well in dishes requiring low, slow cooking: simmering, braising, steaming
- Often cooked using moist heat to soften, reduce bitterness (becomes milder the longer you cook)
- Ham, turkey, beans, okra added for flavor
- Flavorful cooking liquid (pot liquor) prized as a dipping sauce for cornbread



Southern Foods



Grits

- Porridge made from stone-ground corn or hominy
- For breakfast, lunch, or dinner
- Method: boil 4-5 times water to grits, salt, cook about 45 minutes, stirring often
- Mild flavor, can mix with salt, butter, cheese
- Different texture/ flavor than polenta
- Served with eggs + bacon, fried catfish, shrimp, salmon croquettes, country ham

Southern Foods

Po Boy

- Traditional Louisiana sandwich
- Made with roast beef, ham, or fried shrimp, crawfish, fish, oysters, or crab
- Served on a light, fluffy French bread made with less flour and more water
- Can be dressed with lettuce, tomato, pickles, mayonnaise, butter, pickle rounds, hot sauce, mustard





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Any Questions?