



Let's Stir the Pot: Gumbo vs. Jambalaya

Gumbo Day Sparks a Louisiana Flavor Feud

This October, we're putting the spotlight on two of Louisiana's most famous dishes (and probably those that are most frequently confused by people from outside the state) – gumbo and jambalaya – as we dish out a little friendly competition. The rivalry simmers hottest between two parishes: Lafourche (“Louisiana’s Cajun Bayou”), known for its Cajun roots and soulful gumbo, and Ascension (“Louisiana’s Sweet Spot”), home to Gonzales, the Jambalaya Capital of the World. With National Gumbo Day falling on October 12 (sorry, jambalaya fans, but there’s no National Jambalaya Day ... yet), we think it’s the perfect time to explain the differences between these two iconic dishes and then partake in a little lighthearted showdown.



This is gumbo, y'all ...
Credit: Louisiana's Cajun Bayou

Both gumbo and jambalaya are staples of Louisiana's culinary culture, packed with bold flavor and deep history. But while they share Cajun and Creole roots, the two dishes aren't the same ... and it's all in the rice. Gumbo is a slow-simmered stew with a roux base. It's served with a side of

rice (or potato salad, but don't even get us started on THAT debate – our 2024 press release on that topic caused some division!), and chicken, sausage and seafood are popular add-ins. Jambalaya, on the other hand, cooks the rice right in the pot with everything else ... protein, spices and vegetables.

In Louisiana's Cajun Bayou, gumbo is more than comfort food, it's a cultural necessity that stretches back generations. Every family has its own recipe and no festival or community gathering feels complete without a bubbling pot of gumbo to bring people together. The slow, careful art of stirring the perfect roux is practically a rite of passage in families. "What sets southern Louisiana gumbo apart from the rest of the state is variety," says Chef Anthony Goldsmith, owner/operator of Kajun Twist. "You have many families up and down the bayou cooking gumbo how their ancestors cooked it. Our family cooks gumbo the same as our matriarch, Alzina Toups ... without a roux. Go a street over and that family will be cooking with a heavy roux. There's no bad gumbo down the bayou."



And gumbo's biggest rival – jambalaya.

Credit: APTC

In Louisiana's Sweet Spot, jambalaya has been celebrated for decades as a community dish. "It may resemble paella in its origins, but over generations it's become uniquely Louisiana," says Charles Lavigne, owner of Pot & Paddle Jambalaya Kitchen. "Bold flavors and always cooked to feed a crowd." The town of Gonzales earned its title as the Jambalaya Capital of the World in 1968, and it has hosted the annual Jambalaya Festival ever since. What began as a small community event with just 13 cooks competing for the "World Jambalaya Cooking Champion" crown has steadily grown, with nearly 70 competitors and more than 50,000 attendees in present day.

Whether you're in Louisiana's Cajun Bayou savoring a rich gumbo or in Louisiana's Sweet Spot enjoying jambalaya straight from a pot, you definitely won't roux the day you tasted authentic Cajun and Creole cooking. We encourage you to celebrate National Gumbo Day by savoring both sides of the state's most delicious rivalry.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Mallory Furry

mallory@mindybiancapr.com