



CHRISTOPHER GROMEK

TULANE CHICKEN ANDOUILLE GUMBO

This gumbo recipe is among the relatively few that use no roux.

SERVES: 6 to 8

1	whole raw chicken, weighing about 3 pounds	1 quart	water
2 tablespoons	vegetable oil	1	large white onion, minced
1 tablespoon	Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning, or the Creole seasoning recipe on page 93	1	medium green bell pepper, minced
1 pound	andouille sausage, sliced into 1/4-inch rounds	3	celery stalks, minced
2	10-ounce packages frozen okra, sliced	2	whole bay leaves
2 quarts	fresh chicken stock*	4	garlic cloves, minced
		4 cups	gumbo filé powder, to taste
			cooked white rice

*See page 85 for a chicken stock recipe.

DIRECTIONS

Cut the chicken into pieces and set aside the back, gizzards, and liver to make the chicken stock. Lightly dust the chicken pieces with the Creole seasoning.

Using a skillet large enough to hold all the pieces without crowding, brown the chicken in the vegetable oil over medium heat. Turn the chicken pieces with tongs every few minutes to brown them evenly. After the chicken pieces have browned, remove and set them aside to cool. Using the same skillet, brown the andouille slices and set aside.

Add the okra slices to the skillet and also brown them well. If there is not enough remaining vegetable oil in which to brown the okra, add a tablespoon of the oil to the skillet. Since frozen okra is not nearly as sticky and stringy as fresh okra, it should cook well in about 20 minutes. When the okra is cooked, pour in the 1 quart of water and let the contents simmer, covered, on low heat.

Pour 2 quarts of the chicken stock into a 4-quart Dutch oven or another heavy pot. Add the onion, bell pepper, celery, bay leaves and garlic. Next, add the okra with the water and increase the heat level to bring the liquid to a rolling boil. When that boiling point is reached, reduce the heat level to moderate. Cover the pot and allow to simmer for 1/2 hour. Then add the chicken and sausage and simmer another 1/2 hour. After the gumbo has finished cooking, discard the bay leaves.

At serving time, ladle the gumbo into the bowls over cooked rice. Pass the filé powder in a small bowl. Most fans of filé gumbo usually sprinkle a fairly generous pinch of the powder over the gumbo.

Christopher came to our test kitchen as a summer assistant from Tulane University, and never left. He was able to take the leftovers, and living in a house shared by other students, he became the go-to guy on campus for food, and lots of it.

His guests believe he is a culinary wizard. Not a bad reputation.

Novice cooks testing recipes are wonderful, because lack of clarity, omissions, or mistakes become obvious.

Quickly, for a young man who couldn't cook, he got into the groove, wielding a knife, and stirring roux. Christopher has learned how and where to shop, and to eyeball fresh seafood. He also developed quite a palate and can discuss the variations of gumbo with authority.

He's one more convert, able to spread the tastes of New Orleans cooking that will travel wherever he lands.

