

Crispy Buster Crabs

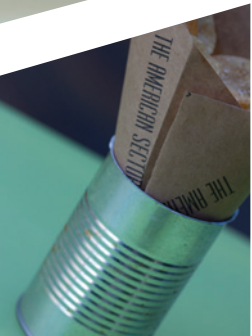
with baked jalepeño cheese grits

"When you understand the story of New Orleans and where the food comes from, you can cook it with more authenticity and soul."

J. Besh



AMERICAN SECTOR
CHEF JOHN BESH



Crispy Buster Crabs

with baked jalepeño cheese grits – serves 2

Ingredients

For the crabs and grits

6 small soft shell blue crabs,
cleaned and trimmed

1/2 cup milk

4 eggs, beaten

1 cup corn meal

1/2 cup flour

1 teaspoon Creole spices

**1 cup McEwens fine ground
white corn grits**

6 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons mascarpone cheese

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 green onion, chopped

2 dashes Tabasco sauce

1 quart canola oil for frying

Salt and pepper to taste

For the sauce

**1 tablespoon extra-virgin
olive oil**

1 small onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup minced fennel

**1 teaspoon crushed
red pepper flakes**

**Leaves from 1 sprig
fresh thyme**

1 sprig fresh tarragon

1 bay leaf

1/2 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup dry vermouth

1 cup crab stock

Method

Note: It's hard to find buster crabs or small soft shell crabs. You can use large soft shell crabs and quarter them. Frying the crab quarters will yield every bit as much of a great dish.

For the sauce

Heat the oil in a pan over moderate heat. Add the onions, garlic, fennel, and pepper flakes to the pan. Cook the vegetables, stirring often, for 3 minutes. Add the thyme, tarragon, bay leaf, cream, vermouth and stock to the pan, increase the heat to high and reduce the sauce by half, 10–12 minutes.

For the crabs and grits

In a mixing bowl, combine the milk, eggs, corn meal, flour and basic Creole spices together using a wire whisk, until smooth. In a medium size sauce pan, bring a quart of water to a boil and add the grits while stirring constantly. Once the grits come to a boil, reduce heat to a low simmer, cover and allow to cook for 20 minutes while stirring occasionally. Once the grits have cooked for 20 minutes stir in 3 tablespoons of butter and four tablespoons of mascarpone cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Dip the soft shells into the cornmeal batter and fry them one at a time in 350 degree canola oil and fry until golden brown before resting on absorbent paper towels and seasoning with additional touch of salt. Using a medium sauce pan, heat the sauce with the garlic and green onion. Bring to a boil and stir in 3 tablespoons of butter, Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat once the butter has been added. To plate this dish, spoon grits into a bowl with a generous amount of sauce ladled around the grits and finished with placing the fried soft shells over the grits.

The American Sector

Todd Pulsinelli

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When dining at the new The American Sector restaurant in The National World War II Museum in downtown New Orleans, customers enjoy a one-of-a-kind historic experience. Classic American dishes, such as hamburgers, hot dogs and milkshakes, are created with new twists and styles. The American Sector is a real-life “blast from the past” – where present and past collide and are brought to life.

