

## WHAT NEW ORLEANS RESTAURANTS GIVE US

*Beyond the Plate*

By Ian McNulty

It's not the trinity and it's not the roux. It's not the local shrimp or crab. And, for all their other wondrous attributes, it's not even the oysters.

The thing that draws a thread through New Orleans food culture and gives it such power can't be explained by the ingredients or even the techniques of Creole cooking.

Instead, it comes from New Orleans people, what they contribute back to the restaurants and the food with their passions and compulsions. It comes down to the intense, protective relationships we create with what we love.

These relationships have proved durable, but the dynamics that underpin them are being tested like never before.

To the health and economic woes of the pandemic, add the political strife that seems intractable and the anguished calls for justice now so urgent.

How can a cultural realm that relies on people coming together survive all the forces pushing us apart?

Yet through it, New Orleans people have demonstrated how much they value the restaurant community by all the ways we have found to support it. In the bleakest times, we've seen how to build new connections through it, relied on it to broaden our conversations, and used it to bring new voices to them.

There has been much speculation worldwide about how restaurants will survive this crisis and what they might look like on the other side.

In New Orleans I can say one thing with certainty: as always, our restaurants will reflect precisely what New Orleans people put back into them.

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Photo by Kenny Morrison



I LOVE THIS RECIPE BECAUSE TO ME  
JAMBALAYA IS A DISH OF TOGETHERNESS.

# House Party Jambalaya

*This is my go-to for parties, when Endymion is rolling near my Mid-City house or when the Saints are on TV. The key is in layering and the order of steps. Once you have those down, the dish doesn't require too much attention, which means you can pay more to your guests.*



Photo by Kenny Morrison

## INGREDIENTS

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced  
2 lbs smoked sausage (preferably andouille), diced  
2 white onions, diced  
1 green bell pepper, diced  
2 celery stalks, diced  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1½ tablespoons Emeril's Essence seasoning  
6 cups chicken stock  
2 tablespoons butter  
2½ cups white rice  
1 bunch green onions, sliced, for garnish

## HOW TO PREPARE

Heat oil in deep pot or Dutch oven and cook chicken and sausage together until seared and pieces of meat begin to stick to bottom. Add ¼ cup broth and scrape meat loose with a wooden spatula or spoon. Continue cooking until the bottom of the pot is dry. Transfer meat to a plate.

Add butter to the pot and cook onion until it browns. Add ¼ cup broth and scrape pot again. Add bell pepper, celery, garlic, and seasoning mix and cook until the vegetables begin sticking to the pot. Add ¼ cup broth, scrape, and cook until the liquid is reduced and the pot is again dry.

Add the cooked chicken and sausage, the rice, and 4 cups broth. Cover and cook on low heat for 45 minutes.

*Yields 8 servings*