

*A Provocative Question at the Dinner Table with*

# WENDELL PIERCE

ACTOR AND BUSINESSMAN

"My last meal would be my mother's **Smothered Okra**," Wendell Pierce promptly responded. The simple yet incredibly flavorful dish depends upon fresh ingredients and evokes home and both a beginning and ending of life for Pierce, a native New Orleanian. Born and raised in the city, he would want to return for a last meal that encompasses all the flavors of his hometown. This would feature fresh warm bread from Leidenheimer Baking Company and cocktails like the Bow Wow by Neyow's Creole Cafe and Gentilly Juice, a cocktail combining vodka and a special juice blend that is served annually at the Gentilly Fest in Pontchartrain Park. Lastly, he would want Wynton Marsalis' "Stardust" to usher him to his next gig.



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Wendell Pierce is an actor known for his roles in *The Wire*, *Treme*, and *Death of a Salesman*. He also has various business interests in the city.





Photos by Kenny Morrison

*"There's a certain young lady I'd like to have at my last meal."* – WENDELL PIERCE

## TEE'S SMOTHERED OKRA

In a large, heavy-bottomed, nonreactive saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat, heat the oil until hot, 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the okra, onion, bell pepper, celery, and garlic and stir to coat with the oil. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking or burning until the okra is so tender it's breaking apart and is an army-green color, about 45 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and their juices and the sausage, if using, and stir to mix well. Re-cover the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until the juices thicken slightly, about 15 minutes.

Stir in the shrimp and cook, stirring often, until the shrimp are cooked through and the flavors have blended, 10 to 15 minutes longer.

Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper.

Serve at once over rice.

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup canola oil or olive oil  
2 pounds fresh or thawed frozen okra, trimmed and cut crosswise into ½" pieces  
1 yellow onion, chopped  
1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped  
1 celery stalk, chopped  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
1 15-oz can diced tomatoes, with their juices

1 pound smoked pork sausage, cut into ½" slices (optional)  
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined, tails removed  
Salt, to taste  
Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste  
Hot cooked rice for serving



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