

Photo courtesy of Kenny Morrison



Fried Green Tomatoes

with Shrimp Rémoulade

by JoAnn Clevenger

This is Upperline's most famous creation. Its origins marry my country upbringing near Alexandria, Louisiana, in the 1940s and 1950s where I ate fried green tomatoes, and the cosmopolitan dishes I discovered as a teenager upon moving to New Orleans. I had never been to a cafeteria before entering the A&G Cafeteria on Loyola Avenue. It was overwhelming at first to see all that food there for the taking, glowing under special lighting. So much was new, in particular shrimp rémoulade on little oval platters. I had never even seen a tiny platter—and in north Louisiana at that time, shrimp were not eaten unless they were fried and served with a tiny container of tartar sauce on the side.

In 1991, when I heard of a new movie, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, my brain pounced. Upperline had to have an upscale version on the menu! Next morning my first thought was, "Aha! We'll put our Shrimp Rémoulade on top of the tomatoes."

Cold shrimp, hot tomatoes, spicy sauce, Southern Creole synergy... I must have dreamed it. Our guests loved the combination, and no one copied it until a few years later when I walked one afternoon into Uglesich's, a beloved New Orleans restaurant that closed in 2005, and Anthony Uglesich called from across the dining room, "JoAnn, I copied your fried green tomatoes. Come try mine." Well, that opened the doors to many variations in New Orleans and around the nation, even on po-boys. It was thrilling to have inspired so many cooks, recipe creators, and chefs and made thousands of guests happy! I was very proud.



Photo courtesy of JoAnn Clevenger



Rick Bragg

Pulitzer Prize-winning writer,
journalist, and author

I spend a lot of time thinking about New Orleans, a place I loved deep down in my bones. When I think about it, I often think about a place called the Upperline, and the great and warm woman who made it possible. JoAnn Clevenger was one of those rare people who could make this world better just by walking around on it.

I love food, and I love New Orleans food especially. And I loved JoAnn's place even more than that. I remember simple things, like shrimp and grits, and a great piece of Gulf fish, and the best bread pudding. But mostly I just loved the woman herself. She was good to me every time I saw her, and I had the feeling that if I saw her every day, it would be that same way.

Fried Green Tomatoes With Shrimp Rémoulade

30 minutes plus chilling time
Serves 2

Notes: At Upperline, we used 3 cooked and chilled shrimp on each slice of hot tomato. Other sizes can be adapted.

The rémoulade sauce can be used in other dishes, like crab meat or cold boiled new potatoes with diced celery. When refrigerated, the sauce will keep up to one week.

Plating

Place 2 hot tomato slices side by side on each of two tiny oval platters or salad plates. Top each slice with a single row of 3 to 4 shrimp, depending on size. Spoon 1 to 2 Tbl, or more to taste, of the sauce in a wide ribbon over the shrimp and tomatoes, leaving edges peeking out. Garnish the side of the plate with vinaigrette-dressed greens, if desired. Serve immediately.



Shrimp

- 12-16 (about ½ pound) headless, deveined, shell-on shrimp (thawed if using frozen)**

Bring water to a boil. Stir in crab boil seasoning; simmer for 1 minute, then taste for salt and add hot sauce if desired. Add shrimp in their shells to the boiling water. Poach shrimp until they become pink and opaque; they will cook quickly, so approximately 3-4 minutes. Shrimp will usually
- 2 tsp crab boil seasoning**
2 qts water
Crystal hot sauce, to taste.

float and curl into a “C” shape when they are done. Do not overcook. Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon, rinse with iced water, and peel. Refrigerate the peeled shrimp in a tightly covered container until they are chilled. Keep cold until ready to plate.

Fried Green Tomatoes

- 2 to 3 green tomatoes, sliced into 4 slices that are ¼” to ⅓” thick**
1 egg
1 cup whole buttermilk

In a medium bowl, whisk together egg and buttermilk. In a shallow dish, combine corn flour, salt, and pepper. Dip tomato slices in egg mixture, letting excess drip off, then dredge in corn flour mixture, shaking off excess. Do not fry tomatoes until ready to serve. Pour oil to a depth of ½” in a large sauté pan or Dutch oven, and heat to 375°F over medium heat.
- 1 cup yellow corn flour**
½ tsp kosher salt
¼ tsp ground black pepper
Vegetable oil for frying

Rémoulade Sauce

- BATCH A INGREDIENTS**
½ cup Creole mustard
3 Tbl mayonnaise
2 Tbl ketchup
1 Tbl prepared horseradish
2 tsp finely chopped garlic
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp fresh lemon juice
1½ tsp regular paprika, or more as needed for a light brick red color
¼ tsp ground white pepper
⅓ tsp ground black pepper
⅓ tsp ground cayenne pepper
Pinch of kosher salt

BATCH B INGREDIENTS
½ cup olive oil
- BATCH C INGREDIENTS**
¼ cup minced celery stalk with leaves
2 Tbl grated yellow onion
1 Tbl minced green onions, tops only
1½ tsp minced fresh parsley
Crystal hot sauce, to taste

In a small bowl, mix all Batch A ingredients until well blended. Whisk in the oil from Batch B in a slow, steady stream until combined. Add Batch C ingredients, stirring until well combined. Taste for salt, and add hot sauce. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

When the oil begins to shimmer, place tomato slices in a single, uncrowded layer in the pan. Cook over medium heat, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, about 3-4 minutes on each side. Tomato water content varies so cooking time will vary. You can gently raise a slice to check color. When done, the slices will still be a little firm but can be easily pierced with a fork. Remove and blot lightly with a paper towel. Serve immediately