A Visit To The

TABASCO®

PEPPER SAUCE

FACTORY

McILHENNY COMPANY

Avery Island, Louisiana 70513
The TABASCO® sauce factory at Avery Island is the latest in a series of buildings used since the mid-1800's for the manufacture of TABASCO sauce. The original frame building known as the "Laboratory" was located on the home grounds of Edmund McIlhenny's family. It was here that the formula by which TABASCO is made was perfected. The Laboratory was replaced in the early 1900's by a brick building operated for the next 75 years and now used for storage and the production of pepper mash. The present factory, completed in 1980, follows the same technology developed over 100 years ago. This is how the product is made:

Every year in January seeds are planted in greenhouses and hotbeds, where the young seedlings grow until April when they are transplanted into the fields. By August the plants have begun producing peppers which are harvested only after they have reached just the right shade of bright red. This is most important as it is their color which produces the famous 'TABASCO red' for which the product is so well known. Once harvested, the peppers are brought to the old factory where they are crushed with a small amount of salt into a 'mash'. The pepper mash is then put into white oak barrels for aging. Each barrel is capped with a wooden cover into which several holes have been drilled. On top of this cover, a layer of salt from the Avery Island salt mine is placed. During warm weather active fermentation takes place and the gases and juices given off escape through the holes in the cover and the layer of salt. During cooler weather fermentation subsides, and as the layer of salt dries, it forms a crust which acts as a seal. The barrels of mash are stored in aging warehouses for three warm seasons. This is an essential step for it is here that the raw product slowly develops its unique flavor. After aging, the barrels are opened, drained, and the mash mixed with distilled vinegar. This mixing process takes four weeks after which the seeds and skins are strained off, leaving only the pulp and juice of the pepper with the vinegar. The finished product is then ready for bottling. There is no cooking involved in the manufacture of TABASCO sauce, but rather the pepper mash goes through a slow, natural curing process in the barrel. It takes time, patience, and care to produce the only pepper sauce entitled to use the trademark "TABASCO®".

TABASCO sauce has been in international distribution for many years, and today is sold in over 100 countries in the world. Special labels are printed in Japanese, Swedish, Spanish, Italian, French, Chinese and Dutch.

TABASCO sauce is concentrated and goes much further than most pepper sauces. The following suggestions are minimum quantities that will add flavor without making the dish too hot. As you gain experience, you may find that you want to add more.

**EGGS:** When scrambling, season using 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce for 6 eggs, otherwise 2-3 drops per egg.

**SAUCES, GRAVIES:** Per recipe serving for 6, add 1/8 tsp. Tabasco sauce for mild-flavored sauces, and 1/4 tsp. for heartier sauces or gravies.

**SALAD DRESSINGS:** For extra zip, mix 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce with 1/2 cup salad dressing.

**SOUP:** Add 2-3 drops of Tabasco sauce per portion while cooking, or to your taste at the table.

*TABASCO®* is a registered trademark of McIlhenny Co.