Has French, Spanish Tastes

City World Famous For Food

New Orleans and pompano en papillote.
New Orleans and crayfish bisque.
New Orleans and red beans and rice.
The Crescent City and good food go together in the minds of its residents and of its visitors.
New Orleans has always had a tradition of good cooking. It all started when the city was French—when the larders in the small colonial homes were filled with the products of the field and lake, and the walls were lined with flavor-giving herbs that the adaptable French housewife had quickly discovered would add immeasurably to the quality of the food she prepared.
Coming from a country where eating was more than an appetite-satisfying process, food to her was a medium of pleasure and the natural, untampered flavor, of the food insufficient. Then the Spaniard came and in time his love for seasonings merged with the French feeling for delicacies and the art for which New Orleans is today world famous—Creole cooking—was born.
While this superb cooking is largely French and Spanish, influenced partly by the Choctaw Indians and Negro slaves, the product is definitely New Orleans and in no way an imitation of what is found in Paris, Marseilles or Seville.
This is due to the dissimilarity of the raw materials found here and there, many food products in fact not being available in any section but this one. Without the Indian, perhaps, New Orleans would never have discovered the possibilities in the ordinary looking sassafras leaf, which is even less remarkable when dried to the point of disintegration. Yet in this finely powdered state it is known as file (fie-leaf) without which that famed Creole family dish, gumbo, would not be what it is.

GUMBO VARIABLE

What is gumbo? What can be put into gumbo is almost limitless, and there are many variations of the dish. One popular recipe calls for a half-dozen crabs, a pound of shrimp, two dozen oysters, a green pepper, two stalks of celery, one onion, two pods of garlic, some thyme, bayleaf and so on; or with gumbo which makes the gumbo a meal in itself; or mixed with red beans, or even as a dessert, ris a lait cooked with milk and sugar, allowed to settle and served cold.

The cooks of New Orleans have laid their magic touch on every type of food imaginable. They have raised the art of seasoning to a high level. When an Orleanian sits down to a table in his room or in one of the city's unexcelled restaurants, he plans not only to satisfy his appetite, which some how is universally good, but to please his sense of taste, which is always acute.

New Orleans cooking is due to the Creole tradition of perfection, of ever seeking the best qualities in the materials on hand and making appropriate use of them.

Retail Food Sales Over $120 Million

Food sales are the largest item in the New Orleans retail trade.

From the Crescent City's supermarkets and neighborhood stores flow a steady stream of goods.
Sales in 1951 were estimated by the Chamber of Commerce at $120,416,000.
An estimated 3000 establishments handle food items in New Orleans.

More than 4000 employees in these stores receive an annual pay roll of more than $6 million.

Swellling the value of the food business in New Orleans are the 2000 eating and drinking establishments, which have annual sales over $65 million, according to U. S. Census reports.

Wholesale grocery establishments in the city add their value to the industry with sales topping $140 million annually.

Wholesale grocery establishments number about 140, with 2000 employees and an annual pay roll of $5 million.

Grand annual sales total for the grocery stores, eating and drinking establishments and wholesale food houses is set at more than $325 million.

The figure is based on the latest U. S. Census reports and comparisons by the Chamber of Commerce.

These groups add their value to the community in many related ways.

Trains, trucks and planes bring food into the city, causing employment of many more Orleanians.

Much of the produce on the New Orleans market was raised by nearby truck farmers, most of whom trade in New Orleans stores.
The wholesale farm produce business in New Orleans has annual sales topping $69 million, census figures show.

The enormous food industry of the city is geared to serve the New Orleans public and satisfy their individual tastes.

Supermarkets scattered throughout the city serve great numbers of families who arrive by car and depart with a full week's groceries in the rear seat.

This is in contrast to 75 years ago, when a woman went grocery shopping daily, and carried her packages in a basket over her arm.

Neighborhood grocery stores, which vary from the operator size to the class near by, have a different community. Most cater to the needs of the neighborhood and serve as a social meeting place as well as a market.

The far-reaching activities of local wholesale grocery establishments bring a greater variety of food to the New Orleans store shelves than was imagined possible in 1877.