Easter dinner with a Cajun flair:

Easter fashions have changed over the years. No longer do you see milady wearing wide brimmed hat trimmed with flowers and ribbons in the Easter parade... and the "no frills" fashion extends to entertaining and table setting. The hand-embroidered linen table cloth with matching napkins has been replaced by plastic... or none at all, in keeping with the casual life-style we've grown so accustomed to.

Some families like to get away for holidays and go camping so this Easter I'm going to share some camping recipes with you.

Last year my second son, Gregg, and five of his buddies went on a camping-hunting trip near Kentwood. The trip had been planned to coincide with spring gobbler turkey season.

He used a Coleman stove. Friday night he prepared Fried Frog Legs and Deer Chips. Deer Chips are small pieces of meat, cut from a deer roast. Saturday night he prepared Pot Roasted Mallard and Gadwall Ducks and Sunday he cooked Wood Rabbit-Sausage Gumbo. These are the recipes I've chosen for you today.

Since so many of us are weight conscious, I also want to tell you about the Eight Layer Salad that will keep for a week. It comes from Lynn Howell of Basile and my own Marinated Salad Bowl... then you can make your own salad dressing... starting with a half cup of mayonnaise, your basic ingredient.

Easter just wouldn't be Easter without something sweet. First of all there's the formula for Avoyelles Strawberry Pies. This recipe comes from my daughter, Roxie Britt of Flagstaff, Arizona, who got it from a friend, Phyllis Rhymes of Marksville... and lastly a luscious recipe for "The Cake."

Don't forget your Cajun heritage... whether you're at home, traveling or camping... be sure to "pock" eggs with someone this Easter.

Red's Fried Frog Legs and Deer Chips

- 30 frog legs
- 1/2 lb. deer roast, cut into small pieces
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup milk, salt, black & red pepper
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups cornmeal
- 2 cups cornflakes, crushed
- 6 large Irish potatoes, cut into slices

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat them with a fork. Add to this the cup of milk and then season with salt, black and red pepper. Stir with fork.

In a paper bag, put the flour, cornmeal and cornflake crumbs and season generously with more salt, black and red pepper.

Heat oil in large black iron pot. When hot, take about seven frog legs and a half cup of deer chips. Dip them into the egg mixture and then shake them in the bag until well coated.

Fry in hot fat until golden brown. Allow about 15 minutes for the frog legs and about 20 minutes for the deer chips.

While the frog legs and chips are frying, prepare the potatoes by peeling them and then cutting into long strips.

Fry a batch in the same pot until golden crisp, about 15 minutes. Drain on paper towel.

(Then, while the next batch of frog legs and chips were on the fire, the fellas munched away on the first batch, adding only a little catsup and a cold beer to whet the whistle.)

The cooking process is continued until all the frog legs and chips have been cooked and a batch of potato strips in cooked fast to clear the grease. (When the oil has cooled, it is transferred to a jar and set aside for the next "frying time."

Saturday was spent scouting the woods for the Gobbler... and sure 'nuf, one member of the group got one.

The menu for Saturday night supper was Pot Roasted Wild Ducks, he did it this way...

**Pot Roasted Wild Ducks**

- 3 whole Mallard ducks
- 3 whole Gadwall ducks
- 6 turnips
- 1 package carrots
- 2 apples
- 1 large bell pepper
- 1 large onion
- 1 large cooking spoon
- 1 large spoon shortening
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 large spoon salt, black & red pepper
- 2 large spoons water
- 4 large turns and cut into chunks
- 2 large bowls carrots and cut into one-inch pieces
- 1 large bowl cut into large pieces, discarding the core
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Dry the ducks off well, inside and out with paper toweling.

Mix the salt, black and red pepper together and rub well inside and outside.

Remove the peel from the turnips and cut into chunks. Scrape the carrots and cut into one-inch pieces. Peel the apples and cut into large pieces, discarding the core. Remove the seeds from the bell pepper and cut into strips. Skin the onion and cut into strips.

Stuff the duck cavities with the turnips, carrots, apples, and bell pepper and onions.

Put the shortening into a large iron pot. Do not heat. Put the ducks on top the cold shortening, arranging them on their backs.

Place pot on Coleman stove on low heat. Cover the pot. (This is important). When the ducks start steaming real well, after about 15-20 minutes, add a half cup water and raise the fire to medium. Cover the pot and allow to cook for 2 hours. (This gave the fellas time to play a few hands of cards, swap tall stories and get their hunting equipment ready for the next day... and, of course, someone had to dress the turkey!)

When the ducks are done, remove them to plates (in this case, each fella had a whole duck).

Mix the flour with a half cup water and stir with gravy to
Duck, deer, rabbit and cake

thicken. Serve gravy on rice cooked in a separate pot. (Since you have your meat and vegetables all cooked together, the guys had sliced cantaloupe, bread and their favorite beverage (!?) to round out the meal.

Sunday was spent hunting for Gobbles and again, one of the fellows was luck enough to get one... giving them two, weighing about 16-18 pounds each.

Sunday evening, their supper was Rabbit-Sausage Gumbo, served over bowls of rice with crackers on the side.

Easter dinner

Are you one of those people who like to make your own salad dressing? Well...you've turned the right page. I have all the variations for you...just select the one you like and blend away.

Start with a half cup of mayonnaise, your basic ingredient, and add the ingredients below or experiment if you like with any number of combinations.

Cucumber Dressing—add 1/2 cup minced cucumber, 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Swiss Dressing—add 1/4 cup grated Swiss cheese, 1/4 teaspoon caraway seeds.

Celery Dressing—add 1/4 cup minced celery, 1 tablespoon cut up chives.

Russian Dressing—add 1/2 cup French dressing, 1 minced green pepper, 2 tablespoons chili sauce, 1 tablespoon grated onion.

Cheesy Cheddar Dressing—add 1/4 lb. grated Cheddar cheese, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1/2 minced clove garlic, 1/4 teaspoons salt, 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire.

Thousand Island Dressing—add 1 tablespoon chopped stuffed olives, 1 chopped hard boiled egg, 1 tablespoon minced green pepper, 1 teaspoon grated onion, chopped parsley for taste.

Half and Half Dressing—add 1/2 cup French dressing, 1/2 cup mayonnaise.

Sharp Cream Dressing—add 1 teaspoon grated onion, 1/2 cup light cream, 1/2 teaspoon sugar, 1 teaspoon vinegar.

Herb Dressing—add 1 teaspoon cut up parsley, 1 teaspoon cut up chives, a few drops of lemon juice.

Roquefort Salad dressing—add 1/2 cup French dressing, 1/4 cup Roquefort cheese.

Mustard Dressing—add 1 tablespoon prepared mustard.

Horseradish Dressing—add 3 tablespoons bottled horseradish.

Avoyelles Strawberry Pie

2 pie crusts, 9 inch
2 cups water
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup white Karo
1/2 cup cornstarch
1 box strawberry gelatin, regular size
1/4 teaspoon salt
Prepare two nine-inch pie crusts. Bake and allow to cool completely.

Put the water sugar, syrup, cornstarch and salt into a sauce pan and cook over medium heat until mixture is clear.

Remove from heat, add the dry strawberry gelatin and stir well to mix thoroughly. Allow mixture to cool completely. This is important.

Slice the strawberries and arrange them on the bottom of the cooled pie crusts. When gelatin mixture is completely cool, pour over strawberries in both pie shells. Place in refrigerator to chill for at least two hours before serving.

Top each serving with whipped topping and for an extra festive note, reserve a few whole strawberries and use as a garnish on each serving.

Demis: The nice thing about this recipe is that it makes two pies...you can serve 16 people...or serve one and keep the other for another day or send the extra one to an elderly shut-in, someone who is convalescing or to someone you like.

Marinated Salad Bowl

1 1/2 cups cooked, chopped chicken
1 cup cubed sharp natural Cheddar cheese, 4 oz.
1 cup corn chips

Put the chopped chicken and drained beans into a refrigerator dish. Pour French dressing over all. Cover and place in refrigerator to marinate for several hours. Drain, reserving marinade.

Combine the chicken-bean mixture with lettuce, cheese and chips. Toss with a fourth cup of the reserved marinade. Serve with the remaining marinade.

Serves four to six.

Avoyelles Strawberry Pie

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1 box strawberry gelatin
1 tablespoon sugar
1/4 cup cornstarch
1/2 cup water
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup white Karo
1/2 cup syrupt
1/2 cup brown Karo

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Put the water sugar, syrup, cornstarch and salt into a sauce pan and cook over medium heat until mixture is clear. Remove from heat, add the dry strawberry gelatin and stir until dissolved.

While the oven's hot, why not bake THE CAKE. This recipe comes from one of my card-playing friends, Audrey Pitre and is not only easy to make but plump delicious.

THE CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 stick margarine at room temp.

Blend together the softened margarine with the yellow cake mix, the one egg and the water. Press into a pan the size of 9 by 14 inches to form a pie crust.

In a bowl, blend the softened cream cheese with the three eggs and the box of powered sugar. Beat well and pour over crust. Bake at 350°F for 35 to 45 minutes.

Prep-note: Audrey said if you'd like to make a more festive cake, add a cup of chopped nuts and a cup of flaked coconut to the crust mixture...or a half cup of each or a cup of either.

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Easter Greetings From Fontenot & Guidry

Your complete family.

Peace to All Of Mankind