Some Recipes Are from Exiles of Grand Pre

BY CLAIRE PUNEKY

DONALDSONVILLE, La. — The day dedicated to Mother and the menu for the special dinner in her honor are relatively recent comers to the celebration calendar. But mothers and their culinary art have long gained fame in song and story.

Here, in country where generations ago Acadians settled, mothers have fed their families delectable dishes that their mothers in turn taught them to prepare. And in many a home that boasts Acadian ancestry, the Mother’s Day meal will certainly have one or more of these taste-savoring foods.

Some of these recipes that have come down from the exiles of Grand Pre more than 200 years ago found their way into a volume prepared during the Acadian Bicentennial Celebration of the mid-1960’s by that association, the State Department of Commerce and Industry and the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission.

Important to the Acadian menu is the roux, the foundation for the gravy, something that must be part of the dinner if one wants a good feast. But what was served on her big day. The skillet is used for Sauce Exiles of Grand Pre. Only and the mixture is spread Piquante, which can be used with chicken, shrimp, wild duck, turtle, etc. To the heated shortening onions, garlic, celery, sweet pepper, salt, black and red pepper are added and cooked slowly until tender, and, of course, continuous stirring is necessary.

Then tomatoes are added to cook very slowly until the oil separates, when water is added as well as sliced lemon. The white is covered and cooked over low heat for a half hour, with frequent stirrings. Immediately before serving, finely chopped parsley and onion tops are added to the sauce. For those who like mushrooms, this item is one that blends in well with other ingredients.

But what is an Acadian dinner without Parce, or rice dressing? Three cups of boiled rice, with chicken giblets, fat, onion, sweet pepper, minced parsley, minced green onion, salt, black and red pepper will produce a delicious addition to the dinner to serve a half-dozens dinners.

There are many more mouthwatering dishes of Acadian ancestry, and those who have the opportunity to dine on such cookery will certainly remember the mother of the family and what was served on her big Day.

How does one make a roux? It takes shortening in an iron or heavy aluminum skillet heated over a medium flame, to which is added flour and some continuous stirring over a low flame. The flame goes down even lower when the mixture gets a golden cast.

Then enter the onions to be stirred with the other ingredients until the onions begin to brown. This completes the basic roux. Sometimes tomatoes are added. Those in cans are recommended. These go in after the onions are brown, the flame is very low, and the next thing to wait for is the separation of the shortening from the other ingredients. That’s when water is added. And there it is.

Perhaps Mother is to be honored with Court Bouillon or fish chowder. A recipe calling for 10 pounds of red snapper will serve 20. Garlic French Bread goes well with this, and is prepared by using a loaf of French bread, a quarter-pound of butter and a clove of minced garlic. The butter softens, and the crushed garlic is mixed with it. Then the bread is cut diagonally and the mixture is spread on it, and all is heated.

Rice goes with the Court Bouillon, but everybody knows how to cook rice.

Another popular dish on the Acadian table this Sunday should be Piquacese de Volaille or stewed chicken no doubt served with boiled rice and a green salad.

Something to delight the palate of the host and their guests would be Patates Douces, or candied sweet potato over low heat for a half hour, with frequent stirrings. Immediately before serving, finely chopped parsley and onion tops are added to the sauce. For those who like mushrooms, this item is one that blends in well with other ingredients.

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