3 Soviet chefs coming to Louisiana

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DONALDSONVILLE — Soviets got a taste of Louisiana cooking during the summit, thanks to Chef John D. Folse of Lafitte’s Landing Restaurant. Now, Americans get to learn there’s more to Soviet fare than caviar and vodka.

Folse is bringing three chefs to the United States in November as part of a 10-member Soviet-American culinary exchange. Baton Rouge is the first stop on their itinerary, with a side trip scheduled for Donaldsonville.

Folse said officials of the Soviet Sovincentr, the Center for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with Foreign Countries, agreed to the American tour beginning Nov. 10.

“The common denominator in the world today is food,” Folse said. “It’s easier to make peace over the dinner table than the bargaining table.”

Folse also hopes to capitalize, so to speak, on his successful restaurant venture during the Reagan-Gorbachev summit last May.

Folse said he was the first chef ever to serve American food in the Soviet Union and shipped in 14 tons of food to the Moscow World Trade Center for “Lafitte’s Landing East.”

It took Folse and associate David Young a year to work through the Soviet red tape. This time, Folse said, getting the chefs to come to America was easier. Part of the reason is that the Soviets are interested in setting up restaurants in the United States.

Americans can develop a taste for blinis, blintzes and borscht when the Soviet chefs tour Baton Rouge, New Orleans; New York; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; St. Augustine and Orlando, Fla.; and San Francisco.

Folse said they’ll tour Disney World, the Statue of Liberty and Bourbon Street. They will ride tractors on an American farm, visit stars in Hollywood and inspect the Delta Pride Processing Plant in Indiana, Miss.

But their first stop on Nov. 11 is breakfast at a Piccadilly Cafeteria in Baton Rouge.

“It’s what America is all about,” Folse said of his choice of Piccadilly. He said the 128-store chain grew from one restaurant in Baton Rouge. Folse wants to expose