

WARM UP

1 Quickly read the text about southern soul food in the USA and match a question with each paragraph.

- Is there only African-American soul food?
- How did African-Americans get so creative?
- How did soul food originate?
- What can you expect to eat?
- What is modern soul food like?
- What is soul food?

GLOSSARY

gumbo *zuppa di gombo*
dumplings *gnocchi*
hog *maiale*
butchered *scannato*
chitterlings *trippa*
fancy *elaborato*
trotters *zampe*
staples *alimenti base*
dandelion *dente di leone*
dye *colorante*

SOUTHERN SOUL FOOD USA: CLAM CHOWDER RECIPE

1 _____

Born out of poverty, but cooked with love, soul food is generally associated with the African-American community, although soul food is a true 'gumbo' of cultures and influences. Dishes vary a lot in different parts of the South, which is a big geographic area with many traditions.

2 _____

Typical examples of soul food would include fried chicken, chicken fried steak breaded, pan-fried steak; chicken and dumplings; fried pork chops; wilted lettuce; greens; green beans seasoned with fat back (pork fat); black eyed peas; breaded okra and cornbread, to name just a few traditional dishes.

3 _____

During the period of the African slave-trade to the United States, plantation owners provided cheap food supplies to slave families, because they had to feed them, but didn't want to waste good food. For example, slaves might get the chicken backs which can be cooked down with dumplings, or cheap beans of various types, which they improved with the addition of pork fat. African-Americans women who prepared food for the plantation owners had the chance to work with better quality foods, so gradually combined their own cooking traditions with new ones to produce tasty dishes for their own families and friends.

4 _____

They cooked them up the unwanted small intestines of butchered hogs serving them as 'chitterlings'. Likewise, chicken livers could be fried and served with gravy and there were a variety of greens that were cooked, seasoned and served with cornmeal bread, called 'hoe cakes'. Wild game also rounded out meals, so squirrel, rabbit and even opossum were served as well as fish and frogs' legs.

5 _____

Many people think that all white southerners were rich and owned slaves, but as in any society there were only a few in the South then who were rich enough to afford slaves and fancy food. White southerners may have had freedom but they still struggled to have enough food to eat, so soul food spread amongst them too.

Pickled pigs trotters, fried pork fat and brains scrambled with eggs and liver were protein staples. Poverty demands creativity and excellent cooks, black and white, learnt to gather pokeweed greens for salads, use stale bread in puddings and wild strawberries for pies. It was simply a matter of survival, by putting some 'soul'

into the food so that the family ate well regardless of the base ingredients.

6 _____

Some southern families still make and serve chitterlings and pickle pigs' trotters; but pig's ears, beef tongues and dandelion wine are rare in the South today. Pork skin, on the other hand, is mass marketed as thicker and puffier potato chips.

In some areas you can still find pickled eggs, prepared with red dye, which stains the eggs and your fingers. Gravy of many varieties continues to be popular, as well as biscuits combined with milk gravy for a delicious breakfast. Most towns have one or more restaurants serving fried chicken and deep fried dishes, now cooked in oil not traditional lard. Ironically, dishes born out of poverty are now regaining popularity and even being considered exotic delicacies in some fine dining restaurants!




READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text again and choose the correct answer to each question.

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Soul food is food for people... | A from a specific area. | B who love food. | C without much money. |
| 2 Which of the following is a typical soul food ingredient? | A Beef steak. | B Pork fat. | C Oysters. |
| 3 During the slave-trade, female African-Americans... | A ate good food. | B ate bad food. | C cooked good food. |
| 4 They made use of the plants and animals plantation owners did not... | A know how to cook. | B need. | C want to eat. |
| 5 At that time, all southern whites were... | A free. | B free and rich. | C rich. |
| 6 Common proteins for poor people included... | A brains and trotters. | B pokeweed and strawberries. | C puddings and pies. |
| 7 Today, traditional southern soul food is... | A impossible to find. | B still found in some places. | C still served everywhere. |
| 8 Fried food soul dishes have become more... | A common. | B healthy. | C popular. |

LISTENING

3  23 Listen and put this recipe for clam chowder in the correct order. The first and last are done for you.

CLAM CHOWDER

- a Add 180 ml wine; bring to a boil and add 1 kg fresh, live, cleaned clams, cover and cook until the clams open.
- b Add 2 large potatoes peeled and roughly diced and simmer gently until cooked.
- c Add 250 ml water, fish stock, or light chicken stock and bring to a simmer.
- d Blend half the potato mixture into a thick, creamy soup consistency.
- e Combine the two potato mixtures, the clams, broth and 200 ml cream and simmer.
- f Drain them into a colander, catching the cooking liquid in a bowl for the chowder.
- g Sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped in butter until soft and transparent.
- h Set the liquid aside and pull the clams from their shells and discard shells, parsley and thyme.
- i Place clams and chopped vegetables into the reserved broth.
- j Simmer chopped onion, leek and carrot with sprigs of parsley and thyme in 400 ml water for 10 minutes.
- k Taste for seasoning and serve garnished with chopped parsley and whipped cream.



WRITING

4 Write a short menu of Italian 'soul food', creative and tasty dishes made from cheap/often discarded ingredients. You should include three starters, three main courses and three desserts. When you have finished, display it for your classmates to see and decide which you like best.