

Food and Fitness

Family Cooking Traditions

Web sites of interest:

- [cooking louisiana.com](#)
- [exerciseismedicine.org](#)
- [families.com](#)
- [peoplespharmacy.com/herb-library](#)

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Family cooking traditions abound in all cultures. In Louisiana in the spring the traditions center around crawfish.

The crawfish is a fresh water crustacean, a cousin to the lobster. The easiest and most popular of the crawfish traditions for celebrating any occasion is the crawfish boil. Yet the favorite dish, least celebrated because it is the most labor intensive tradition is the making of crawfish bisque.

In the Morrison family it was a three day affair, a time to

get together and visit as well as cook and enjoy good food.

Today's fast paced living doesn't allow for much of this good old fashioned slow food preparation! However, now with the ability to purchase frozen crawfish tails rather than cleaning and peeling a 100# sack of craw-



Passing on the tradition! fish, it takes only two days to prepare bisque! See Recipe Corner page 4.



Cool Mint for Dog Days of Summer

Eating fresh mint is as healthy as it is tasty! Mint comes in a variety of forms---fresh leaves, mint oil, or as a liquid extract. But one of the prettiest and most enjoyable ways to use it is to grow and harvest it yourself.

Mint can be grown in a container or in the ground and enjoys moderate temperatures in a sunny location. Many varieties of fresh mint grow throughout the spring, summer and fall months. (It will not withstand extremely high or low temperatures, but does come back in the next growing season.)

Peppermint and other mints can provide loads of flavor and these significant health benefits:

Improved Digestion—The distinct aroma of mint stimulates the salivary glands and digestive enzymes. It soothes the digestive tract, thereby increasing appetite and improving digestion.

Tension Headache—The antispasmodic properties of mint can help in soothing and calming tired nerves. What a nice way to reduce stress and tension headaches. (Could be why Southerners drank Mint Juleps after a long day.)

Bloating—Experts suggest that mint helps in removing gas from the stomach.

Healthy Skin—The antioxidant properties of mint help in fighting free radical damage of the cells.

This may help in maintaining healthy skin and treating itching of the skin.

Oral Care—The presence of tannins in mint assists in keeping odor-causing bacteria in the oral cavity under control. The tannins can also prevent formation of cavities.

Muscular Aches and Pains—Regular use of mint in the diet can provide symptomatic relief of painful inflammatory states like arthritis, chronic tendonitis, and acute strains and sprains.



Article and mint recipes in Recipe Corner contributed by Catherine Townsend.



A sprig of fresh mint can add a refreshing kick to a glass of lemonade. Or drop mint leaves into the ice tray to make minted ice cubes for a festive touch!

Exercise Has Gone to the Dogs!

Don't want to spend money to join a gym? Tired of expensive diet programs?

Walking a dog for 20 minutes daily, 5 days a week for 1 year resulted in an average 14 pound weight loss for participants in a University of Missouri study. Walking your dog daily helps both you and your pooch lose weight and maintain healthy hearts, lungs and muscles.

A study in British Columbia showed that dog owners got almost twice the amount of mild to moderate exercise as individuals without dogs. Dr. Robert Kushner, an obesity expert at Northwestern University calls dogs "natural exercise machines on a leash".

We know that it's easier to stick with an exercise pro-

gram if you have an exercise buddy. Your next door neighbor may make excuses for not walking with you, but a dog will never turn down the chance for a walk.

Walking a dog can make the difference between getting in a walk or talking yourself into staying on the couch. Feeling an obligation to walk your dog accounts for part of the motivation to get off the couch, but it also helps you to establish a regular exercise schedule.

A study cited by Heather Long at *families.com* says that 92% of dog owners are more likely to stick with an exercise routine over the course of a year as compared to 52% of folks who join a gym.

Regular exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition to

strengthening your heart, lungs, and muscles, exercise is a great way to reduce stress.

A Japanese study showed walking a dog rather than walking without a dog provided greater benefit to the autonomic nervous system. Just having a dog enabled pet owners to deal with bereavement better!

So, if you're having a hard time sticking to an exercise program, volunteer to pull that chore out of the job jar at home. Don't have a dog? Consider becoming a dog owner, borrow a friend's dog, or volunteer to walk a dog at a local animal shelter.



*Article contributed by
Betsy Greer, MS, Exercise Physiologist*



Recipe Corner

Crawfish Bisque

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded

1 cup garlic pods, peeled

1 small bunch celery

2 green bell peppers

5 cups onions in chunks

1 cup parsley

1 cup green onion tops

3/4 loaf French bread

6 eggs

1/4 cup ground black pepper

1/2 cup plus 2 Tbs. salt

10.5# frozen crawfish tails (or meat from 100# sack of live crawfish)

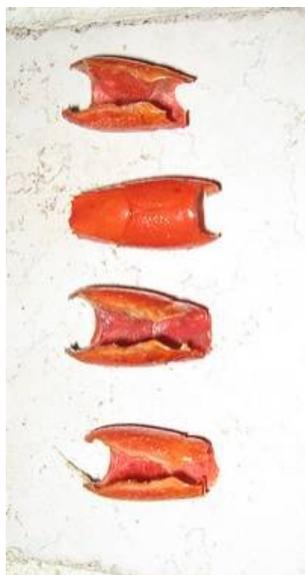


Process all vegetables in a food processor.



Process crawfish meat and mix with processed vegetables, egg, bread, and seasonings.

After peeling crawfish, save shells



(200) from body cavity of crawfish. Clean thoroughly and boil cleaned shells to sterilize.



Drain and cool.

Stuff processed crawfish meat and seasonings into shells. Roll in flour. Deep fry until crust forms over the opening of the shell to retain stuffing inside. Or bake in trays in oven



(Continued on page 5)

Recipe Corner

to reduce fat content.

Make a gravy by first making a roux (flour, darkly browned in oil). Nowadays one can purchase roux ready-made.

- 1 cup roux
- 4 oz. tomato paste
- 3 gallons water
- 6 large onions
- 2 bell peppers
- 6 ribs celery
- 10 cloves garlic
- 1 cup parsley
- 1 cup green onions
- Salt and black pep-



tomato paste. Boil water and add vegetables in a large soup or gumbo pot. Add roux-tomato paste mixture. Bring to a boil. Drop stuffed shells into gravy. Simmer over low heat 2 hours. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve over rice. Next time you make this be sure to get help!

Bisque recipe came from Mrs. J.G. Beaud of Sugarland Plantation, as it was originally made by Ophelia Porche

Cool Green Pea Salad

- 2 cups frozen green peas
- 1 frozen 8 oz. bag sugar snap peas
- 1 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 T. white wine vinegar
- 1 T. lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 T. chopped fresh mint

Bring about two cups water to a boil in a medium-sized pot. Add vegetables and cook for two minutes. Drain and rinse immediately with cold water to stop cooking.

Place peas and sugar snaps in a shallow casserole dish. Prepare dressing by combining the olive oil, white wine vinegar, lime juice, salt, and mint. Drizzle dressing over vegetables and refrigerate for a minimum of two hours. This salad tastes even better the next day!



per to taste

Process vegetables. In a small pot heat roux and add



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Recipe Corner (continued)

Cream Cheese Mints

1 3-oz pkg. cream cheese (room temperature)
1/4 - 1/2 tsp. peppermint extract
2 1/2 - 3 cups powdered sugar, sifted

Red or green food coloring (optional)

Mix cheese in bowl until soft. Add coloring and flavoring and gradually add the sugar. Mix and knead until it is the consistency of pie dough or putty. Roll into balls the size of a marble and place on waxed paper. Flatten the mints with a fork for a pretty design. Once firm, let dry for a few hours. They will keep a



long time if you store them in an air-tight container. Makes about 2-3 dozen small mints. (If you are adventurous, dip balls in granulated sugar and press firmly into a candy mold. Unmold at once onto waxed paper.)
***These are like the traditional mints people once served at wedding receptions.

Frozen Key Lime Pie

1 reduced fat graham cracker crust
1 can fat-free sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup liquid egg substitute

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice, about ten key limes

1 Tablespoon grated lime peel

1 carton lime flavored sugar free yogurt



Pour all ingredients into a blender and process about two minutes. Add lime peel and yogurt and blend again. Pour into pie crust and freeze--- about two hours. Garnish with lime slices and fresh mint.