Terrific Holiday Trifles

Gingerbread with Lemon Sauce

Chicken Street Tacos

Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese
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Get Fed in the City with Soul

It’s no secret that Mississippi as a whole is home to some great soul food, and the capital city isn’t lacking in it, either. Whether you’re in the mood for delicious fried chicken or a veggie plate consisting of soulful side items, there are plenty of places in the Jackson area to find tasty soul food.

**BULLY’S RESTAURANT – 3118 LIVINGSTON ROAD**
For over 28 years, Bully’s Restaurant has been serving the community with delicious soul food. Specializing in soul food and barbecue, Bully’s is a place where people keep coming back for more — it’s just that good. Fill up on entrées like beef tips, pigs feet, ham hocks, smothered oxtails, barbecued ribs, southern fried catfish, and chitterlings. Daily specials rotate each day and include meals like smothered liver and onions, red beans and rice with sausage, spaghetti and meat sauce, baked chicken and dressing, meat loaf with tomato gravy, and chicken tetrazzini. Of course, the side items are downright southern, too, with options ranging anywhere from mac and cheese, sweet potatoes, string beans, dressing, fried green tomatoes, fried okra, and everything in between. Not only is the food delicious, but it’s fresh — all fried foods are cooked upon ordering, so you know it’s sure to be freshly cooked. Bully’s is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

**SUGAR’S PLACE – 168 W GRIFFITH STREET**
Voted Jackson’s Favorite Restaurant in 2017, Sugar’s Place Downtown is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so you can get your soul food fix with chicken and waffles or a heaping plate of fried catfish. If you stop in for breakfast, served from 7 to 10 a.m., choose from a full breakfast platter with eggs, grits, bacon or sausage, and a biscuit, Sugar’s Waffle Meal, Sugar’s Omelet Meal, Chicken & Waffles, Texas Toaster Sandwich, Sugar’s Biscuit Sandwiches, or Sugar’s BLT. Start your day with any of these, and you’re on track for a great day. For lunch, customers can “build your meal” by choosing one meat and two vegetables, and meats include fried catfish, fried pantrout, baked chicken, fried chicken wings, chicken tenders, and fried pork chop. The veggies vary daily, but you can expect things like greens, lima beans, mac and cheese, green beans, candied yams, coleslaw, fries, corn, and things of the like. Other lunch entrées include pantrout and catfish sandwiches, cheeseburger, catfish and shrimp poboy, chicken poboy, club sandwich, smoked ham sandwich, and salads. Daily lunch specials are also available and change with the days of the week. Finish off your meal with a slice of cobbler or ice cream, and you’ll be in the best food coma possible. Sugar’s is open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and until 10 p.m. on Fridays.

**BIG APPLE INN**
509 N FARISH STREET & 4487 N STATE STREET
For several decades now, the Big Apple Inn has been serving soul food and delicious sandwiches, but their legacy and claim to fame is something a bit different — pig ear sandwiches. It didn’t start out that way, though. In the 1930s, a man named John Mora would roll his hot tamale cart up and down Farish Street and eventually earned enough money to open the Big Apple Inn. When the store first opened, Mora made trips to the local butcher, who was getting rid of pig ears, and Mora took them and figured out how to cook them. From there, the pig ear sandwich at the Big Apple Inn was born, and it is still being served to this day, along with tamales, under the direction of Geno Lee, Mora’s great grandson. The menu is simple and has not changed much over the years. Slider sandwiches include smoked sausage, pig ear, hamburger, hotdog, and bologna. Of course, complete your meal with a side of hot tamales to get the full experience of the Big Apple Inn.
FEED YOUR SOUL

JXN MISSISSIPPI

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From My Family to Yours...

Merry Christmas AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

John Taylor, Anne Morgan, J.J., and John Carney

“So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them under the sun.”

Ecclesiastes 8:15
A Chef’s Advice for Stress-Free Holiday Cooking

How many times have you heard someone say they’ve slaved away in the kitchen all day? Stress in the kitchen can easily arise for a variety of reasons, especially when you're strapped for time and have a never-ending to-do list.

As a survivor of Gordon Ramsay’s MasterChef competition, Caitlin Meade – a top 4 finalist on season 8 – understands the pressure all too well. To decrease the stress and make your hosting experience more enjoyable, consider putting these tips from Chef Meade into practice.

- **PREP BEFORE YOU BEGIN**
  Practice the “mise en place” method – a French term alluding to having everything in place before cooking. Measure ingredients, chop vegetables, and prepare utensils to create a steady workflow.

- **PLAN IN ADVANCE – LIKE A CHEF**
  Prep the main dish the night before, have easy appetizers assembled ahead of guests’ arrival, and outsource sides to family and friends.

- **SAVE MONEY BY GETTING SPICY**
  Before it’s time to cook, pre-make spices. Since many store-bought blends can be overpriced, this is a way to save both time and money while personalizing your own flavors.

- **SAVE TABLE WINE FOR DRINKING & USE COOKING WINE**
  A secret ingredient and important pantry staple for Chef Meade, cooking wine is perfect for when she needs to make a pan sauce or add flavor. It’s even saved her from having to open a nice bottle of table wine, as most recipes call for less than a cup. An option like Holland House Cooking Wines delivers consistent, bold flavor while standing up to high temperatures. Available in Sherry, Marsala, Red, and White, there are plenty of flavor-boosting options that will have your friends and family wondering what your secret ingredient is.

- **CREATE YOUR OWN STOCK**
  Many recipes call for chicken stock. One way to save money and time at the store is to create your own. Save any leftover poultry carcasses, wing tips, neck, and bones. Add onion peels, celery tips, carrot tops, and other vegetable scraps in the freezer. When you’re ready to make a batch, fill a large pot with the leftovers, cover with water, bring to a boil, and simmer 1-2 hours for stock that can last up to one year.

**SPINACH FETA AND ARTICHOKE DIP**

Recipe courtesy of Caitlin Meade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonstick cooking spray</td>
<td>1 package (8 ounces) reduced-fat cream cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cloves garlic, minced</td>
<td>Salt and pepper, to taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 package (12 ounces) frozen spinach, thawed and excess liquid drained</td>
<td>Garnishes (optional): feta cheese, roasted red peppers, Crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cans (14 ounces each) whole artichokes, drained and chopped</td>
<td>Grease 6-8-quart slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. In slow cooker, mix garlic, spinach, artichokes, water chestnuts, mozzarella, feta, yogurt, and red pepper flakes. In a small saucepan over medium heat, simmer cooking wine 3 minutes. Stir in cream cheese and turn off heat. Transfer cream cheese and wine mixture to slow cooker; add salt and pepper, to taste, and stir to combine ingredients. Cook on low for two hours. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with feta and roasted red peppers, if desired. Serve with your favorite crackers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnuts, drained and chopped</td>
<td>1-1/4 cups low-fat mozzarella cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-1/4 cups low-fat Greek yogurt</td>
<td>3/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled, plus additional for garnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)</td>
<td>1-1/4 cups low-fat Greek yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup Holland House White Cooking Wine</td>
<td>1 package (8 ounces) reduced-fat cream cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Holland House White Cooking Wine**

Holland House White Cooking Wine is a versatile and flavorful alternative to traditional white cooking wines. It’s perfect for a variety of dishes, from classic cream sauces to modern floral-infused creations. Its balanced acidity and mild, aromatic profile make it a great choice for both professional chefs and home cooks alike. Holland House White Cooking Wine is also non-GMO, free of preservatives, and suitable for vegetarians, making it a delightful addition to any kitchen. To learn more about Holland House White Cooking Wine and other signature products, visit [hollandhousecookingwines.com](http://hollandhousecookingwines.com).

**Holland House**

Holland House is recognized as a leader in pioneering the development of more than 200 flavors of cooking wines and is a family-owned operation with over 100 years of experience in the industry. Holland House’ wines are available in major retail chains and online at [hollandhousecookingwines.com](http://hollandhousecookingwines.com).

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10 DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020
Melissa Cookston Hosts Dinner at James Beard House in New York City

Celebrity Chef Melissa Cookston, owner of Steak by Melissa in Southaven along with Memphis Barbecue Co. in Horn Lake and Dunwoody, Ga., recently hosted a barbecue dinner at the James Beard House in New York City. Above and beyond her restaurants or cookbooks, Chef Cookston is a brand all to herself. A seven-time world barbecue champion and the first female pitmaster to be inducted into the Barbecue Hall of Fame, she made for the perfect chef to host a Beard House autumnal barbecue feast, complete with the perfect amount of Southern flair. Cookston curated and prepared an hors d’oeuvre and dinner menu to include all the Southern classics: catfish, pork chops, baby back ribs, beef tenderloin, quail, and a lemon petit cake for dessert.

37th Annual Chefs of the Coast Held Recently

Chef Scott Duplantis of Shaggy’s Chef Milton Joachim of Charred St. Martin High School culinary students

The Mississippi Coast Restaurant and Beverage Association recently hosted its 37th annual Chefs of the Coast Food & Wine Gala in Gulfport. Several restaurants and local chefs went head to head in different areas of competition to take home respective prizes. Shaggy’s won the Golden Chef Award, and Chef Milton Joachim of Charred: A Steak & Oyster Bar took home the title at the inaugural Culinary Gladiator Battle. High school culinary students also participated in the event with St. Martin High School culinary students winning first place in their cooking competition. Moss Point High School students came in second, and Biloxi High School students placed third. Lastly, the Coast Restaurant Association recognized local restaurants with Partnership Awards, and this is the first year this award has been presented. Recipients of this award included Scranton’s Restaurant of Pascagoula, Island View Casino Resort, and the Stinson Group, which includes The Reef in Biloxi and Salute Italian and Seafood in Gulfport.

White Pillars Wins Cajun Oyster Category at Oyster Cook-off

The Hangout Bar and Grill in Gulf Shores, Ala., recently hosted their annual Hangout Oyster Cook-off Craft Spirits & Beer Weekend, and restaurants from around the southeast participated in different oyster cooking categories, a shucking contest, a Bloody Mary Contest, and more. White Pillars Restaurant and Lounge, located in Biloxi, won the Cajun Oyster category with their Biloxi Hot Oyster. You can taste the award-winning hot oyster for yourself at White Pillars in Biloxi.
Foodie Gift Guide

This holiday season, keep your foodie friends in mind with these gifts and stocking stuffers that are perfect for those who love food. Whether it’s a sweet treat, a kitchen item, or anything food-themed, these gifts are sure to be foodie-approved.

Decorative throw pillows are perfect for any occasion or season, and there’s bound to be one to fit almost everyone’s liking. For your foodie friends, this pillow cover will make for the perfect decoration in their home. $7.99
www.amazon.com

For those in your life with a sweet tooth, check out Sugartina gummy candies. These Sugartina Champagne Bears put a fun twist on classic gummy bears as they are made with Dom Pérignon champagne. The sweet bears come in classic Brut and rosé flavors and are the perfect party favor or stocking stuffer. $8.95
Chaney’s Pharmacy - Oxford
www.sugartina.com

Don’t leave the little foodies out this holiday season! Kids will love to play restaurant with fun and colorful play food sets. Choose birthday treats, cookies, or breakfast-themed sets to go with their play kitchen, and let the little ones join in on the food fun. $99.99
www.tasty.com/toys
Calling all food lovers! This trivia game allows players to prove who is the smartest foodie of them all. Foodie Fight includes over 1,000 questions on topics ranging from culinary science and celebrity chefs to food history and exotic cuisine. Snag this game for your foodie friends and break it out during gatherings this holiday season to see who really knows their foodie information. $19.78

www.amazon.com

Chill your wine in style this holiday season with a beautiful, marble wine cooler. The properties of marble naturally help wine keep its cool, and it makes for a great gift for all the wine lovers in your life. $29.95

www.crateandbarrel.com

For the coffee-loving foodies, a fun mug makes for the perfect holiday gift or stocking stuffer. We love this one with a famous Julia Child quote. $15.95

www.amazon.com

Spoonfudge is delicious no matter what time of year it is, but the holiday season brings out even more fun flavors that any sweets lover will enjoy. The jars are the perfect size for stocking stuffers and include flavors like classic Fudgey Fudge, Pecan Pie, Cordial Cherry, Chocolate Turtle, Egg Nog, Red Velvet Vixen, and more. 2 for $15.00

www.spoonfudge.com
Let's Gather!

Families and friends have been gathering since the beginning of time. We gather to celebrate good news, come together during solemn times to give our support, and we gather based on traditions for special occasions and holidays. Most importantly, we gather because it makes us feel good to share these moments with others.

Traditionally, food plays an important role in gatherings and it doesn’t matter if it’s potluck or someone testing out a new recipe or a recipe passed down for generations. Memorable food paired with loved ones, friends, and co-workers in familiar surroundings brings comfort during the hustle and bustle of the holidays.

Chef Labron Alexander, Executive Chef at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi looks forward to this time of year. “It’s important to reflect on accomplishments, set new goals, express gratitude, continue traditions and even add new ones to the mix,” said Chef Labron.

Chef Labron and the Blue Cup staff are proud to prepare and serve food to hundreds of employees throughout the year. They also offer family-sized holiday entrées and sides called Outtakes for employees to purchase and take home during this holiday time of the year.

“There is something special about the holidays. It brings people together, and we always see an increase in employees fellowshipping and enjoying meals together in the Blue Cup, which is so wonderful to see,” said Chef Labron. “Co-workers are the people we spend a majority of our time with during the day, and we are grateful to be able to facilitate the gathering of teams from across the company. I’m also excited to prepare and introduce our employees to eclectic takes on traditional holiday favorites.”

“Nothing makes me think of the holidays like mac & cheese or a winter medley of Brussels sprouts, butternut squash, and, of course, you can’t forget the cranberries,” said Chef Labron. “These are typically side dishes prepared separately, but when you combine them all together through, you get a flavor profile that is robust, earthy, and rustic. These particular veggies and cranberries also offer many health benefits.”

Brussels sprouts and butternut squash are packed with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants. Cranberries are a holiday staple and this superfood is high in nutrients and antioxidants.

“We’d love to know if you prepare Chef Labron’s holiday favorites for your holiday gatherings. Tag us in your creations on Facebook @BlueCrossBlueShieldofMississippi and @eatDrinkMISSISSIPPI.”

### SHEET PAN WINTER VEGETABLE MEDLEY

1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons plus 1/4 cup olive oil, divided
3 tablespoons maple syrup
1-1/2 pounds peeled, cubed butternut squash
2 cups Brussels sprouts (trim root end)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 cups of pecan halves
1 cup fresh cranberries
Dijon Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

Mix cinnamon, 2 tablespoons olive oil, and maple syrup in a bowl. Add cubed butternut squash to mixture and toss. Cut Brussels sprouts in half. Add 1/4 cup of olive oil, salt, and pepper. Place Brussels sprouts and butternut squash on a sheet pan, and bake for 20 minutes in a 350-degree F oven. Toast pecan halves for 5 minutes in the oven. During the final 5-10 minutes of baking, add nuts and cranberries to vegetables. Toss Dijon vinaigrette with roasted vegetables. Serve immediately.

### DIJON VINAIGRETTE

1/2 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoon sherry vinegar
1/2 tablespoon diced shallots
Salt and pepper, to taste
1/3 cup olive oil

Mix mustard, vinegar, shallots, salt, and pepper together. Emulsify with 1/3 cup of olive oil.

### BUTTERNUT SQUASH MAC & CHEESE

2 cups cavatappi pasta
1 yellow onion, diced
1 tablespoon butter
2 tablespoons flour
5 cups of butternut squash purée
5 cups vegetable broth
3/4 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt
2-1/2 cups shredded cheese blend
Panko bread topping (recipe follows)

Boil pasta and set aside. Sweat diced onion in butter and add flour. Stir in butternut squash purée, vegetable broth, milk, and salt. Reduce heat and add shredded cheese blend along with pasta. Place in a 9x12x2-inch baking dish and bake in a 350-degree F oven until heated through, approximately 15-20 minutes. Add herbed panko topping to top, return to oven, and allow toasting to brown.

### PANKO BREAD TOPPING

1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 teaspoons fresh herbs (flat leaf parsley, chives, rosemary)

Mix panko with melted butter and add fresh chopped herbs.

### KOMBUCHA CRANBERRY MOCKTAIL

1-inch piece ginger, plus some for garnish
1 sprig rosemary, plus some for garnish
4 ounces cranberry juice
24 ounces ginger kombucha
Cranberries

Muddle ginger and rosemary. Add cranberry juice and Kombucha. Stir gently and then strain into ice-filled glass. Garnish with rosemary, ginger, and cranberries.
Cranberries Signal the Arrival of the Holiday Season

BY DIVIAN CONNER

So, I have a confession to make. I can’t believe I am about to admit this, but alas, I just have to get it out. In September, I purchased Christmas decorations. I am one of those people who sees a leaf fall from a tree and will immediately start the holiday playlist in the living room. Of course, my children insisted that we at least put up the Halloween decorations if I was adamant about skipping the entire fall season. So, with much protest, I reluctantly gave my white and pink LED pillowcase with a flamingo in a Santa hat a hug and placed it in the closet. It seemed like it took a million years for September and October to go by, but I saw the light at the end of the tunnel when I walked into my local grocery store one day and, to my surprise, there it was...the beginning of the holiday season...cranberries.

The holiday season is the epitome of love, family, sharing, giving, kindness, and celebrations. When I see cranberries in the store, I know that the season has officially begun, and I actually do a little happy dance shimmy in the store (ask my kids, I will really dance, and I might sing a song, too). I make cranberry cinnamon rolls, cranberry muffins, cranberry jam, cranberry danishes, cranberry kolaches, and cranberry upside down cake. I jar up large batches of fresh cranberry sauce and give it as gifts. It is true, if you have never tried homemade cranberry sauce, you are missing out. I keep a couple of loaves of fresh bread around during the winter months because I always have cranberry sauce on hand, and it’s like a little taste of heaven when you pair it with cream cheese or butter on fresh bread.

With the appearance of bags and bags of cranberries lining the produce shelves—snuggled quietly in between the broccoli and radishes—it is a reminder that the season is family time, and we look forward to friends and family traveling in. I get so happy just thinking of all the memories to be made, jokes to be shared, bad singing karaoke contests to be won, photos to be taken, and all the good food that we sometimes reserve only for this exact time of year. I guess that is why a mere bag of tart berries can make me all giddy inside—because it’s not every month you can find them. They only come out once a year, and it makes it just more special to create something for someone that you love with something you do not have access to on a daily basis. So, grab a bag or two on your next grocery run and don’t be shy! 😊😊
CRANBERRY UPSIDE DOWN BRUNCH CAKE

Cranberry topping (recipe follows)
2-3/4 cups sifted cake flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
4 egg whites
1-1/2 cups sugar, divided
3/4 cup butter, softened
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
Dried pineapple flowers (recipe follows)

Prepare cranberry topping and set aside.
Sift together cake flour, baking powder, and salt.
In mixing bowl, beat the egg whites until foamy. Add in 1/2 cup sugar and continue to mix until it creates a meringue with soft peaks.
In another bowl, add butter and remaining sugar and cream together. Add sifted dry ingredients with milk a little at a time, then add in vanilla and almond extract.
Add the meringue to the flour mixture until mixed completely.
Line two 8-inch cake pans or an 11x15-inch rectangle cake pan with parchment paper.
Pour in cranberry topping and cover with cake batter. Bake at 350 degrees F for 25-35 minutes.
Allow the cake to cool and, using a serving tray, place tray on top of cake and flip over to release the cake. Remove parchment and serve.
Garnish with dried pineapple flowers.

CRANBERRY TOPPING

1 bag of fresh cranberries, cleaned
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
1/2 cup water
Juice of one lemon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-1/2 teaspoons grated lemon peel

In sauce pan, add all ingredients and cook on high for about 3-5 minutes until cranberries start to burst, stirring to avoid burning. Cook for 1 more minute after berries begin bursting and remove from heat. Allow to cool so that the sauce stiffens a bit.

DRIED PINEAPPLE FLOWERS

1 fresh pineapple

Cut outer layer from fresh pineapple, and cut off stem and bottom. Cut very thin slices from the pineapple, leaving the core in place. Pat with paper towel to remove excess moisture from the pineapples and place on baking sheet and bake for 2 hours on 150 degrees F, or until they begin to dry out. Remove immediately and place the slices inside a muffin tin so they can form the shape of a flower.
Mint Chocolate Trifle
A
fter a huge holiday meal, who has room left for a heavy dessert? Dessert trifles provide a satisfying after-dinner bite of sweetness without the feeling of overindulgence. Plan to serve one of these tasty trifles this Christmas. Not only are they delicious, but they are easy to assemble ahead of time. edm
Gingerbread Trifle
MINT CHOCOLATE TRIFLE

Serves 6

For the chocolate cake:
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour*
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 teaspoon white vinegar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup cold water

For the trifle:
1 layer chocolate cake, cooled
2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup confectioners’ sugar
1/2 teaspoon green food coloring
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
3/4 cup mint flavored candy (such as Andes or Jr. Mints), chopped and divided

For the chocolate cake:
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
Grease and flour a 9-inch round cake pan or a square 8 x 8 pan.
In a large bowl, mix together flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt.
Add oil, vinegar, vanilla, and water. Mix until ingredients are just combined.
Pour batter into pan.
Bake 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean.

For the trifle:
Crumble the chocolate cake. Spread about a 1 to 1-1/2-inch layer onto the bottom of a trifle bowl or individual cups.
With an electric mixer, slowly beat the cream until it begins to thicken.
Add the confectioners’ sugar, food coloring, and peppermint extract. Increase the speed of the mixer to medium high and beat until soft peaks form.
Gently fold in 1/2 cup of the mint candy.
Spread half of the whipped cream mixture over cake layer. Place another layer of cake top of whipped cream. Repeat, ending with a layer of whipped cream.
Sprinkle remaining candy pieces over the top. Garnish each serving with a layer of plain whipped cream.
Refrigerate leftovers.
TIRAMISU CHOCOLATE TRifle
WITH COFFEE CARAMEL GANACHE

Serves 4

1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1/4 teaspoon instant coffee granules divided
3/4 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cheese mixture:
8 ounces mascarpone cheese or whipped cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons marsala wine
1/2 teaspoon instant coffee granules
1 (7-ounce) package ladyfinger cookies, torn into bite-sized pieces
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
Whipped cream, optional

In a medium bowl, combine milk chocolate and semisweet chips with 1/4 teaspoon of coffee granules. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, water, corn syrup, and kosher salt. Heat mixture until sugar dissolves, about 3-5 minutes. Increase the heat to medium high. Boil mixture, stirring frequently, until it turns to a dark amber color, about six minutes total.

Whisk cream and butter into caramel (don't be alarmed as it will bubble rapidly) until butter is melted and mixture returns to a boil.

Pour caramel over chocolate mixture and do not stir. Let sit for one minute. Whisk in vanilla. Allow ganache to cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.

In the meantime, whisk mascarpone or cream cheese, sugar, Marsala, and instant coffee in a bowl until smooth.

In a trifle dish or tall glass, layer ganache, cheese, ladyfingers, and pine nuts. Repeat layering, then drizzle with additional ganache and a dollop of whipped cream.

GINGERBREAD TRifle
WITH EGGNOG FLAVORED WHIPPED CREAM

Serves 8

1 (14.5 ounce) box gingerbread cake mix

For the whipped cream:
1 pint heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons eggnog
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
Ground nutmeg, optional

For the cake:
Grease two eight-inch round cake pans. Prepare and bake the cake mix according to package directions.

Allow the cake to cool completely. Tear the cake into bite-sized pieces. Store the cake in an airtight container until ready to use to keep the cake moist.

For the whipped cream:
Combine whipped cream ingredients in a chilled metal or glass bowl.
Beat cream on medium-high until stiff peaks form, about 7-10 minutes.

To assemble the trifle:
Spread a single layer of cake on the bottom of a trifle bowl.
Spread a layer of whipped cream over top.
Repeat layers, ending with a layer of whipped cream on top.
Sprinkle with nutmeg, if desired.
Southern Staple Puts Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory on the Map

STORY BY PAIGE MCKAY | PHOTOS SUBMITTED

What started out in the Yerger family kitchen in Yazoo City has turned into something delicious that customers all over the country can enjoy. Whether it’s during football season, the holiday season, or any other day, Mississippi Cheese Straws and other delicious Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory treats can be found all throughout homes and retail stores across the nation, and it all started in with just one cheese straw recipe.

It all began in the ‘90s as Mary Yerger approached retirement from her job as food service director for Yazoo City Public Schools. She had a recipe for homemade cheese straws and made them for friends and family members throughout her life, and she was looking for something to do once she retired. She approached her sons, Hunter and Robbie Yerger, about going into business, and the rest is history – Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory has been in operation ever since, and there are no signs of slowing down.

In 1991, the family worked to find equipment to begin making batches of cheese straws out of Mary’s home kitchen. They installed a commercial oven in her home and started cranking out batch after batch of cheese straws.

“In the two months we produced inside her home, we saw enough success to believe it had the potential to turn into something more,” Hunter said.

The following year, Robbie took over day-to-day operations while Hunter worked to manage and grow the business. Mary retired for good in the late ‘90s, and Hunter and Robbie now own and operate the business and have expanded it tremendously in the years since.

“From Mother’s kitchen, we eventually moved to a 400 square-foot space down the street in Yazoo,” Hunter said. “We only lasted there about a year or so. You haven’t lived until you spend a Mississippi summer in a small room with two convection ovens.”

In 1994, the Yergers built their first building just off Main Street and over the years purchased additional buildings adjacent to the first. “We were driving forklifts down the streets of Yazoo and going from one building to another,” Hunter said.

In 2009, Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory made its most recent move into a newly-renovated 35,000 square-foot facility several blocks from their original location. “Everything was finally under one roof!” Hunter said.

Since its inception in 1991, Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory has grown from just one flavor of cheese straw to
13 different flavors. The first was, of course, the Traditional Cheddar Cheese Straw recipe of Mary’s, and the popular Lemon Straws came to be in 1994. “We were the first company to produce a sweet cookie straw,” Hunter explained.

Along with Traditional Cheddar and Lemon, other flavors include Sriracha Cheese Straws, Sea Salt Caramel Cookie Straws, Peppermint Cookie Straws, Three Cheese Cheese Straws, Cinnamon Pecan Straws, Key Lime Straws, Asiago Cheese Straws, Toasted Almond Cookie Straws, and Cranberry Cookie Straws. You can also find Mudpuppies, Red Velvet Cookies, and Trailer Trash — a mix of peanuts, pretzels, sesame sticks, and bread crisps.

All Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory products are made daily in the bakery in Yazoo City.

“The very first day we made cheese straws in mother’s house, we made about 40 pounds in an eight-hour day, so about five pounds per hour,” Hunter said. “Over the years, we’ve increased our production capability and can produce upwards of 500 pounds an hour. During the holidays, we bake as many as 150,000 or more individual cookies per day.”

The holiday season is one of the most popular times for the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory, and they stay busy this time of year fulfilling online orders and orders to be sent to retailers around the country. Special for the holiday season is their number one gift item, the Gail Pittman Holiday Gift Tin. Each year, Gail Pittman custom designs a tin with a beautiful holiday theme that includes eight ounces of Traditional Cheddar Cheese Straws and eight ounces of Red Velvet Cookies.

Over the last 30 years, the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory has grown not only within the city of Yazoo and in production numbers, but also with the specialty food industry. “The specialty food industry didn’t really exist when we first started,” Hunter said. “Now, we see over 1,500 different specialty food vendors at trade shows we go to, so we’ve grown up with this industry.”

Along with being sold online and in gift shops, drug stores, home stores, retail shops, and other storefronts across the country, the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory also recently represented the state of Mississippi at the White House at the
Cookie Straws

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory’s recipe for Traditional Cheddar Cheese Straws is the same heirloom recipe handed down through generations of the Yerger family.

third annual Made in America Product Showcase this past July. Businesses from each of the 50 states were invited to display their products that are made in the United States, and the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory showcased different flavors of gourmet straws and cookies during the event.

Whether it’s Traditional Cheddar, Key Lime, Mudpuppies, or any of the flavors in between, the Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory has something for everyone. You can find Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory products in several local and chain stores all throughout the U.S., or you can purchase individual and assortment boxes online at cheesestrawfactory.com.
Vice President of the United States Mike Pence greets Robbie Yerger (middle) and Hunter Yerger (right) of Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory at the “Made In American Product Showcase” in the White House in July 2019.
Talbot House Bakery Makes a Difference in Women’s Lives

Just a few years ago, the city of Tupelo didn’t have a facility for women to turn to after going through addiction rehab. Becky Weatherford, who was working at treatment facility in town, realized that the women in her city needed somewhere to go to transition into sober living.

“Every day, the women at the facility would say, ‘Ma. Becky, I can’t go back home because it’s not healthy,’ or they didn’t even have a home,” Weatherford said.

So, she decided to take matters into her own hands, and she opened Talbot House, a sober living facility and transition program for women. Talbot House has been open since October 2015 and is the only program of its type in the area.

Talbot House provides a sober living environment for women making the transition from addiction to recovery and provides a safe, stable, and supportive environment for women to achieve independent sober living. Over the last several years of working at Talbot House, Weatherford realized that job readiness is a challenge that a lot of the ladies run into.

“A lot of the women had not worked for a while, and they needed a refresher,” she said. “Some had employment challenges, and a lot of places will not hire people straight out of treatment.”

Employing the ladies at Talbot House then became Weatherford’s next endeavor. Back in 2013, Weatherford started a home baking business out of her house. She sold cinnamon rolls, called Stupid Good Rolls, out of her home for two years.

“I had that business for two solid years, and it kept a roof over my head and food on the table,” Weatherford said. “Then I got busy working, I opened Talbot House, and I didn’t have a lot of time for it anymore.”

But Weatherford had those cinnamon rolls in the back of her head when she started working at Talbot House. She wanted to find a way to incorporate her cinnamon rolls into the lives of the women at Talbot House.

“I had in my mind that maybe I could teach the ladies how to make them,” Weatherford said.

From there, the rest is history.

In 2017, Weatherford leased a commercial kitchen on the outskirts of Tupelo, and that was the start of Talbot House Bakery. Weatherford taught the women how to make her famous Stupid Good cinnamon rolls, they would sell them, and the women were re-learning job skills by working in the kitchen. The downside, though, was that since it was a
commercial kitchen, there wasn’t a customer base.

“It was hard to have a job program if you didn’t have a lot of customers,” Weatherford said.

Weatherford moved the bakery out of that commercial kitchen, but, thankfully, that wasn’t the end of Talbot House Bakery. Another opportunity came for Talbot House Bakery earlier in 2019 when a restaurant space opened in town. The space was renovated from top to bottom, and Talbot House Bakery and Café, a fully operational bakery and restaurant, opened on September 25, 2019.

Talbot House Bakery and Café employs a handful women who are living at Talbot House, and they are learning job and work skills that they might need refreshers on. All the ladies who work in the bakery have different tasks and jobs that they tackle on a daily basis, and they make the treats and other foods from scratch every day.

Amanda Roberson, a former resident of Talbot House who wanted to help with the opening of the bakery, oversees the kitchen and restaurant operations with Weatherford. She, Callie Lewis, and Amy Mims, two Talbot House residents, arrive at around 5 a.m. every morning to start baking cinnamon rolls and other pastries. By the time the bakery opens at 7:30 a.m., they have made endless pans of cinnamon rolls and other goods to be sold throughout the day.

Along with classic Cream Cheese Frosting and Coffee Maple Glaze rolls that are

Stupid Good Cinnamon Roll
available every day, customers can find other tasty rolls each day like Sausage Cream Cheese Rolls on Tuesdays, Caramel Pecan Rolls on Wednesday, and Blueberry Lemon Rolls on Thursday. Friday is baker’s choice, and Saturday brings “a little bit of everything.”

Though cinnamon rolls are a best-seller at the bakery, other sweets and treats are just as delicious. Options differ each day, but customers are sure to find items like homemade cookies, fresh baked bread loaves, hot cross buns, slices of caramel apple cake, cheddar biscuits, and a giant, half-pound chocolate chip cookie.

Along with sweets, Talbot House Bakery and Café also serves up a delicious lunch each day from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sandwiches, soups, and salads are all made fresh daily, and Weatherford ensures that they are all delicious. Caroline Pinkston, Talbot House resident, is the bakery’s sandwich maker, and she carefully crafts each sandwich on the bakery’s homemade bread. She even has a sandwich named after her, Caroline’s Grilled Cheese — complete with pepper jack, Swiss, mild white cheddar, and pickles, all melted together on the panini press. Other sandwiches include Mandy’s Roast Beef Panini (named after Roberson), Kirk’s Favorite Panini, and a build-your-own option.

“Everyone had a hand in creating the menu,” Weatherford said. “This is all about helping these women who are survivors of addiction, and we want to empower them.”

Weatherford is in charge of making the soup each day, and flavors change daily, but customers can expect flavors like Turnip Green Soup, Creamy Potato, Tomato Bisque, White Bean and Bacon, and Roasted Corn and Poblano. Each cup of
soup comes with a pimento cheese pinwheel on the side.

One of the best sellers at both breakfast and lunch, though, is what Weatherford calls a CinnaPanini. One of their mouthwatering cinnamon rolls is sliced in half and topped with ham and Swiss cheese, panini pressed, and drizzled with maple coffee glaze.

After eating all the sweet and savory treats at the bakery, customers can grab a cup of coffee to sip on, and they can pay whatever amount they wish to pay. Pay-what-you-want coffee is available all day, and this is made possible due to a donation from Southern Coffee Services in Lexington, Miss.

“They read about us in the paper when we had our grand opening, and they reached out to us,” Weatherford said. “They said they love what we are doing and that they wanted to donate coffee to us.”

Customers can pay whatever they want for their cup of coffee – a quarter, $3, $100. That money from the coffee goes straight back into the Talbot House.

Not only do these ladies make baked goods to be sold in store, but they will also be selling pans of cinnamon rolls for the holiday season. Each order comes in a pan of eight rolls and make for the perfect gift during the holidays. Customers can also stop by the bakery to grab house-made jams and apple butter and house-made honey mustard or garlic mayonnaise.

Though all the food is delicious and made with care, the entire mission of the bakery is to empower the women who are working on themselves and give them a community and a purpose during their recovery.

“We are not professionals,” Weatherford said. “We are just having fun, enjoying each other, staying sober, making friends, and learning how to do something.”

Weatherford set out to help these women recover and help them get stronger, and that’s exactly what Talbot House and Talbot House Bakery and Café does every day.

“The healthier and stronger they are, the stronger their chances are in the future,” Weatherford said. □
Growing up, Chef Matthew Molina of Lion Hills in Columbus was a part of a large family who loved to cook. His family constantly cooked breakfast, lunch, and dinner and enjoyed entertaining family members and friends.

“Tough that cooking for 20 or more people was the norm,” he said. “My parents loved to show us how to cook on a daily basis.”

Though cooking was something Chef Molina grew up doing, he ended up graduating from Texas Tech with a degree in public relations and marketing. After several years of working and traveling post-college, he eventually decided to get back to his roots and go back to school to obtain a culinary degree. Chef Molina enrolled in Texas Culinary Academy – Le Cordon Bleu in Austin, Texas, and has been in the kitchen ever since.

After his training in Austin, Chef Molina relocated to West Point to train and cook under Chef David Schnell at Old Waverly Golf Club. Since then, Chef Molina has helped open three restaurants in the Golden Triangle area, including The Ritz Café in West Point and CJ’s Italian Bistro in Columbus, and is now a culinary instructor and Executive Chef at East Mississippi Community College, or EMCC, Lion Hills Center.

Lion Hills is located at the Columbus campus of EMCC where the daily menus carry a strong, Southern-comfort theme, but the chefs also have the freedom to experiment with international cuisines as well. Being that EMCC offers culinary arts, students also contribute their creativity and special dishes that are also featured. Lion Hills is a resort and golf course that is open to the public, which allows the establishment to function as on-the-job training for culinary/pastry/hotel and restaurant management and turf management programs. Lion Hills can also operate as an events venue, which allows Chef Molina and his staff to develop custom menus and experiment with different dishes.

“We have also developed a Signature Sunday Brunch that’s known throughout the state of Mississippi,” Chef Molina added.

Though Chef Molina thoroughly enjoys his time in the kitchen at Lion Hills, he enjoys days off, much like anyone else, by hanging out with his family and friends and being outside as much as possible. When he’s cooking at home, old fashion burgers in a cast-iron skillet are Chef Molina’s go-to dish.

Other signature dishes of Chef Molina include Chicken Alfredo Lasagna, tacos, and his father’s brisket, and he enjoys cooking with poblano peppers and cumin whenever he can, especially when it comes to his Chicken Street Tacos.

For Chef Molina, every day is a new culinary challenge, and that’s his favorite aspect about working in the restaurant world. He is passionate about not only cooking and creating new dishes, but helping his students building the necessary experience and self-confidence that they will need to be successful in the industry.

“Cooking is about adapting to your current situation and making things happen,” he said.

Chef Molina is absolutely “making things happen” at Lion Hills.
CHICKEN STREET TACOS

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon oregano
1/4 cup canola oil or bacon fat
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced
1 cup onions, julienne
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups chicken stock
1/4 cup tomato paste

In a small bowl, combine 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon minced garlic, 2 teaspoons chili powder, 1 teaspoon paprika, 1 teaspoon cumin, and 1 teaspoon oregano.

Heat canola oil or bacon fat in a large skillet over medium heat. Add julienned onions and cook till translucent. Add 1/4 cup flour and stir to create a light roux. While stirring, add chicken stock and tomato paste. Let simmer till the sauce is thick but fluid.

Add diced chicken and seasoning to the skillet and cook until internal temperature is 165 degrees F.

Serve the chicken in flour or corn tortillas and top with lettuce, pico de gallo, and a twist of lime.

PICO DE GALLO

2 tomatoes, small diced
1/2 onion, small diced
1/4 cup cilantro, roughly chopped
1 jalapeño or poblano pepper, small diced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
Salt and pepper to taste
Juice of one lime

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl and serve.

ADDITIONAL FLAVORS FOR TACOS

Lime wedges
1 avocado, halved, peeled, seeded, and diced
Shredded lettuce
The holiday season has arrived, and that means restaurants and bakeries are cranking out seasonal treats that can usually only be found this time of year. Gingerbread is one of the popular flavors of the season, and several places around our state are featuring gingerbread-flavored desserts and treats that are sure to put you in the holiday spirit.

Broad Street Bakery – Jackson

A holiday classic, gingerbread cookies are fun to look at and even more fun to eat. If you’re looking for a classic gingerbread cookie this holiday season, visit Broad Street Bakery in Banner Hall for delicious, homemade gingerbread men and other fun holiday-themed cookies and sweets.
Old Towne Bakery - Olive Branch

Located in the heart of Olive Branch, Old Towne Bakery is known for its beautiful and elaborate gingerbread houses during the holiday season. Several gingerbread houses were even featured in a Hallmark Christmas that was shot at Graceland last year. Gingerbread houses must be ordered in advance if you’d like to purchase one, and they make for a beautiful display during Christmastime.
Strange Brew Coffeehouse – Starkville and Tupelo

Starkville’s strangest coffee shop and a local favorite, Strange Brew Coffeehouse is known for their tasty signature drinks, fresh baked goods, and delicious desserts. During the holiday season, swing by Strange Brew and warm up with a gingerbread latte to sip on, or munch on a homemade gingerbread scone for a sweet snack.
**Smallcakes - Hattiesburg**

Hattiesburg’s gourmet cupcakery, Smallcakes serves up different flavors of fresh cupcakes each day. Throughout the holiday season, Smallcakes features a delicious gingerbread flavored cupcake that comes topped with a ginger snap cookie. Gingerbread cupcakes are available on different days throughout the season, so be sure to check that they’re available before you visit.

**Sweet Magnolia Gelato - Clarksdale**

Sweet Magnolia, a small-batch, local, artisan gelato company, started out in the home kitchen of founder Hugh Balthrop’s home and quickly became an area favorite. With retail locations all around Mississippi, Memphis, Nashville, Atlanta, and Alabama, Sweet Magnolia Gelato is delicious and always features different flavors of gelato. There is no set flavor list because they are always experimenting with new recipes, but during the holidays, you can find a sweet gingerbread gelato flavor. Check Sweet Magnolia’s website and Facebook page to see where you can snag a pint of the sweet treat.
The Cakery - Oxford

Known for their fun and colorful cakes, cookies, petit fours, and other sweets, The Cakery in Oxford is featuring a gingerbread dessert for the holiday season. The classic gingerbread cake includes rich molasses, cinnamon, and ginger flavors and comes topped with a sweet, cream cheese buttercream icing, sugared cranberries, and evergreen sprigs.

La Brioche - Jackson

An authentic patisserie, La Brioche is known for its fine pastries, cakes, and macarons, as well as delicious brunch and breakfast. For the holidays, they'll feature a Gingerbread Macaron. It will include gingerbread flavored buttercream with crushed gingerbread sprinkled on the outside to make for the perfect holiday treat.
Located in the heart of Clinton, Meme’s Brick Street Bakery serves up delicious, homemade sweets like brownies, cookies, petit fours, cakes, and everything in between. During the holiday season, the shelves at Meme’s are stocked with homemade gingerbread men cookies to make for the perfect holiday treat.
Tried & True

Sciple Mill Still Grinding Corn
the Old-Fashioned Way

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHELLE PUTNAM

North of Dekalb, deep in Kemper County, where trees grow tall and fields spread widely and unapologetically, is a spring-fed creek that never runs dry; where, centuries ago, the Choctaw built their village and named this endlessly flowing water Running Tiger. It is here, around 1790, that Dr. Hunnerly, a South Carolinian, settled and built a mill upon the water.

“When Dr. Hunnerly came in, I’m sure the Choctaws helped him build it because somebody had to build the dam. He couldn’t have done it by himself,” said Eddie Sciple, owner of Sciple’s Water Mill. The original mill, he explained, sat out over the creek at a 90-degree angle to the dam. “It was built like it is now, but it was a two-story building and had a cotton gin in the top and a sawmill over the water.”

In 1880, the mill was torn down and rebuilt, and the water wheel replaced with a Leffel water turbine wheel. There, cotton was ginned until 1955 and lumber was milled until 1962. The gristmill survived but was almost destroyed by a 1973 tornado. With the help of the community, the mill was rebuilt on the original floor foundation with as much salvaged material as could be found and used. Nevertheless, the seemingly indestructible water wheel carried on.

Sciple explained the centuries-old process. The water wheel sits in a hole and is surrounded by gates. Inside the mill is a lever, which, when pulled, opens the water gates. “Right now, you have water on top, about 12 feet of water, but the water can’t escape the water house. Once the lever is pulled, the water goes through and turns the turbine.” The stones then grind the corn. The rocks can be adjusted to grind the meal into fine or coarse grounds. Quarried in upper state New York and manufactured in Newnan, Ga., the rocks have run about 130 years. Once a year, they are taken apart and sharpened.

Sciple, also a full-time instructor over the Department of Ophthalmic Technology at East Mississippi Community College, is the fifth generation to own the mill. The first generation, John and Helen Sciple, bought it from Rose McManus who had bought it from Dr. Hunnerly. “Our family bought the mill about 1860,” and renamed it Sciple’s Water Mill. The community that grew around it took the same name, but in plural form—Sciplers Mill.

“Sciple Mill” cornmeal and grits are made from the whole kernel grain, including the germ. Many meal products on grocery shelves have removed the germ because it contains oil which reduces shelf life. Commercial processing uses rollers that crush the corn.

“Mine grinds it,” said Sciple. “If you took a microscope
and looked at the little grounds, I'me would be round and theirs jagged, which makes a difference as far as sticking together and not crumbling when you cook it.” No additives or preservatives are added, so “this is just plain, 100 percent cornmeal.” And it’s 100 percent gluten-free because it’s 100 percent corn.

Flour is ground at odd times because it’s not gluten-free. “You have to be really careful. When I grind flour, I grind enough to do me for a while. I clean the rocks out and everything is cleaned once I finish, so it doesn’t contaminate the mill.”

People bring their corn to the mill already shucked and shelled. The process hasn’t changed, and the price hasn’t increased since 1790. “I still get an eighth of the toll for grinding,” said Seiple. “If you want to pay, it’s three dollars a bushel for me to grind it. If you don’t want to pay, I take an eighth.”

The one difference is that, around 30 years ago, Seiple started selling and delivering to stores within a 50-mile radius, like Louisville, Philadelphia, Union, Carthage, Meridian, and a restaurant in Columbus.

He buys most of his corn from local farmers, although the number of farmers has greatly decreased over the years. In Mississippi, most of the corn grown is yellow, so the closest grower/producer of the white corn is in Trenton, Ky.

“It used to be that no one ate yellow cornmeal. That was more for feed, dog bread, and stuff like that. It was really strong, but they crossbred it, so now I sell about as much yellow as I do white.” An interesting fact Seiple discovered
through his mail orders is that most buyers living west of the Mississippi want yellow meal, while most living east of the Mississippi want white.”

In addition to grits, cornmeal, and flour, Sciple Mill sells homemade pepper jelly and a fish fry made from yellow cornmeal and special spices shipped from Maryland.

Will the Sciple Mill legacy pass into the sixth generation? “I’ve got two daughters, a son-in-law, and a grandson,” said Sciple. “Hopefully, they can carry it on.”

Sciple Mill
601.416.2860 or 601.743.5870
525 Sciple Mill Rd., Dekalb
(road map may read Sciples Mill Rd.)
Find “Sciple Mill” on Facebook.
WATER MILL OPRY

Just across the street from the old mill was a country store run by Eddie Sciple’s grandfather until 1986. Sciple’s daddy had played in a band all his life but had quit playing. Since he wasn’t doing anything with the old country store building, he cleaned it up and made it into an Opry House. After six months, so many people were coming, they had to expand. “We added on to the back and we played every Saturday night for about 12 to 13 years. Now, we do first and third Saturdays,” Sciple said.
Smokin’ Holidays

Add Extra Flavor to Your Holiday Table with Melissa Cookston’s Smoked Turkey and Ham

Born and raised in the Mississippi Delta, Melissa Cookston is a trailblazing food entrepreneur, and she’s smoking the competition.

Cookston is a seven-time world barbecue champion, owner of restaurants Steak By Melissa in Southaven, and Memphis Barbecue Company in Horn Lake and Dunwoody, Ga., and an author of two cookbooks, Smokin’ in the Boy’s Room and Smokin’ Hot in the South. She is also the first woman pitmaster to be inducted into the Barbecue Hall of Fame. She recently hosted an autumnal feast at the James Beard House in New York City where she was able to showcase her delicious food that’s full of Southern flair.

Cookston is known for her barbecue and smoked meats, and there’s no better way to celebrate the holidays than with her tasty smoked turkey and ham recipes.

For more recipes, visit Melissa’s website at www.melissacookston.com.

Melissa Cookston

MELISSA’S PHOTO BY JAY ADKINS
HOLIDAY SMOKED TURKEY

10-12 pound whole turkey
4 tablespoons cold salted butter, chopped into small
pieces
1/4 cup of Memphis BBQ Company Ultimate BBQ
Rub, or your favorite rub blend
2 ounces fresh sage sprigs
2 ounces fresh thyme sprigs
1 medium onion, peeled and quartered
1 medium lemon, quartered

Rinse turkey, then slide butter pieces under skin
around the breast area.
Season turkey inside and out with BBQ rub.
Fold wing tips under themselves to form a
"platform."
Place in a pan, uncovered, in the refrigerator 8
hours or overnight to allow turkey to marinate and
skin to dry.
Remove from fridge, stuff cavity with herbs, onion, and lemon, then place in 250-degree F
smoker, using apple or cherry wood.

After 2 hours, remove from smoker. Place a meat
thermometer (with an external reading) in the thigh,
being careful to not place it touching a bone, and
wrap fully in heavy duty aluminum foil, then return
to smoker. As the thigh temperature gets close
to 170 degrees F, check the breast temperature
with another thermometer. It should read about
10 degrees cooler. After the breast achieves 160
degrees F and the thigh reaches 170 degrees F,
remove from smoker. Place in an insulated cooler
and allow to rest.

Check the temperatures after 15-20 minutes
and ensure the breast temperature rises above 165
degrees F (safety zone for poultry).
Continue to keep in cooler until ready to serve.
Turkey may then be placed on a platter for carving
at the table or my preference is to carve on a cutting
board and plate the meat on a platter for serving
(much easier than trying to carve over a table).

"One of the reasons I love to smoke turkey for the holidays (or
really, anytime) is the nuanced flavor and texture that smoking it
adds to turkey. Generally, I try not to overwhelm any meat I cook
with smoke, and with turkey, that is especially important, and
the neutral flavor profile of turkey is easily overwhelmed. Poultry
doesn’t have the collagen to break down over a long cooking time
like pork or even beef does, so it doesn’t have to go “low and
slow.” I cook turkeys in my smoker at 275 to 300 degrees, as I
think this is a good combination of allowing smoked flavors to
develop while not drying out the turkey."
- Melissa Cookston
Smoked Ham with Jalapeno Peach Glaze
SMOKED HAM WITH JALAPENO PEACH GLAZE

For the Ham:
1 (8-10 pound) bone-in ham
2-3 tablespoons BBQ rub

Peach Jalapeño Glaze:
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon diced jalapeño with seed removed
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1-inch piece fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced
1/2 cup orange juice
1 (13-ounce) jar peach preserves

While ham is smoking, prepare glaze. To a sauce pot over medium heat, add butter and jalapeño and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes or until golden. Add ginger and cook for 2 minutes.

Get Big Green Egg or your favorite smoker running at 275 degrees.

Add orange juice and deglaze pan. Cook until orange juice is reduced by half.

Score fat in a diamond pattern.

Whisk in peach preserves and bring to a slight boil, then simmer for 5-6 minutes until thickened.

Season ham with your favorite BBQ rub. Place on smoker and cook until internal temp is around 135 degrees F, about 12-15 minutes per pound.

After ham reaches 135 degrees F, begin brushing with glaze and continue to cook until ham reaches 140-145 degrees F. Remove from smoker. Slice and serve with extra glaze on side.
The smell of biscuits, cornbread, and pancakes still takes Burton Webb back to his grandparents’ home in Grenada. “I was the kid who actually sat on my grandmother’s kitchen counter for years and watched her make homemade biscuits without any measuring cups.” He remembers that their home, which was where he and his mother lived for years after his parents separated, was where he learned the value of food and what it meant to sit around a table to have a meal.

Today, Webb works as a manager in the patisserie department of L’etoile de Berger, a well-known bakery in Paris, France, while also creating cooking videos specifically for home cooks on YouTube called, “Cooking with Burton.” He’s also developing a cookbook that focuses on cooking the basics that will be released in 2020.

After graduating from Ole Miss with a biology degree, he began his culinary quest in Nashville, working at a bistro for three years and learning the restaurant business while becoming increasingly enamored by the chefs in action. “It was like watching an orchestra with a little trumpeter here, some bass added next, and, of course, don’t forget the violin solo,” Webb describes the precision and symphony of skills to create cuisine. He soon realized that he had to take his next leap of faith and pursue work in Europe. “I made my decision, and

no, I had never been to Europe before; and no, I didn’t speak Italian, and boy, was I as happy as ever.”

He describes his time in Italy as the most intense work environment that he’d ever experienced. Even in his off hours, he learned as he lived with several Italian grandmothers. For example, he said that pasta is never called noodles, and all the Italian chefs save their water from boiling pasta to use in their sauces. He worked hard and graduated from the Italian Culinary School in Rome before deciding that he wanted more experience. “I had crossed that imaginary bridge of how food is different across the pond, and I needed to see more, eat more, and make more of these foods that were foreign to me so that when I returned to the South, I could offer something totally different.” He decided that France was his next step when he discovered that the country was the number-one place in the world for pastries and bread. After his work there ends in June, he plans to return home to Mississippi and offer his home state more of what he has learned during his stay in Italy and France.

As his friends and family continue to call him to get his advice on cooking a dish such as homemade chicken pot pie, he realizes that he can now help other home cooks by breaking down the more difficult recipes and executing the dishes on video. “I take classic Italian, French, and American dishes and
CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

by Burton Webb

2 sticks of butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup light brown sugar
3/4 cup white sugar
3 tablespoons water, in a small drinking cup
1 tablespoon baking soda
2 large eggs, room temperature
2-1/4 cups of all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 cups chocolate chips
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Turn oven on to 360 degrees F.

Cream butter with the sugars in a mixing bowl with the paddle attachment. It should take around 6 minutes on medium speed.

In a small cup, add water and baking soda and stir. Set aside.

Add eggs to the creamed butter and sugar mixture, one egg at a time, until combined.

Add half of the flour along with all of the baking soda mixture and salt. Let the machine go on a medium-low setting until almost combined. Once here, stop the machine and then add the other half of flour along with the chocolate chips and the vanilla extract. Mix until all is combined.

Grease a baking tray with baking spray and use two soup spoons to portion out the cookies on the tray. Leave about two inches between each cookie.

Place the tray into the oven and let cook for 12-15 minutes. You are looking for the edges to be golden brown only. The residual heat once you pull the cookies from the oven will continue to bake the cookies. If you wait until the entire cookie is golden brown, it will be very hard once it cools completely. Let the cookies rest on the baking tray for 3 minutes before transferring them to a plate or a grill rack.

HOMEMADE CORNBREAD

by Burton Webb

1/4 cup butter
2 cups white cornmeal, plus 4 tablespoons for dusting pan
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1-1/4 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon white sugar
2 eggs
2-1/4 cups buttermilk
3 tablespoons shortening (I prefer Crisco)

Set oven to 400 degrees F and place cast iron skillet inside while it heats up.

Place butter in a small mixing bowl. Place in microwave for 40 seconds to melt it. Let rest at room temperature.

In a large mixing bowl, add cornmeal, flour, salt, baking soda, and white sugar. Use a metal whisk to thoroughly combine all ingredients.

Add eggs to the large mixing bowl with 1/2 of the buttermilk. Whisk slowly to begin to combine everything. Next, add remaining buttermilk and whisk until almost combined. Add melted butter and whisk one more time. The mixture will be soupy.

When oven has come to temperature, pull cast iron skillet from the oven and add the shortening to it. Place it back into the oven to melt shortening. Once melted, remove skillet and sprinkle remaining cornmeal in bottom and sides of the pan. Then, pour in batter.

Place skillet back into the oven and drop the temperature to 375 degrees F. Cook for 25 minutes. Once cooked, remove and let rest in the pan for 3 minutes. Put a plate on top of the skillet and flip skillet over, holding tightly, so that the cornbread is now on the plate. Use oven mitts because the skillet will still be hot.

corn
CACIO E PEPE FOR TWO

by Burton Webb

Water from a faucet or water source
1 heavy teaspoon medium-coarse ground pepper (or 17 turns of one of those pepper grinders)
2 servings of linguine pasta (usually a box is 6 servings, so eye it)
1-1/4 cup Pecorino Romano cheese, finely grated
1 teaspoon salt

In a medium sauce pot, add water to fill it half way up and put on stove top. Set the eye to the highest setting.

With a medium-sized sauté pan, add coarse ground pepper and turn eye to medium-low to toast the pepper.

Once water comes to a boil, add pasta to water and boil for 6 minutes.

When time is up, add two ladles of pasta water to pepper in sauté pan and turn heat up to medium-high. Add pasta to the pan and continue to cook until al dente, about 2 more minutes.

Place grated cheese in a small mixing bowl and add 1 ladle of pasta water to the bowl. Mix until combined. It will resemble a thin paste.

Remove the sauté pan from the heat. Add salt and cheese paste to the pan. Move everything around using a pair of tongs until the cheese mixture has fully combined with all of the pasta. Portion out on two plates and enjoy.
A founding member of the Southern Foodways Alliance (headquartered in Oxford) and Foodways Texas, Toni Tipton-Martin is a culinary journalist, community activist, and author of the James Beard Award-winning *The Jemima Code*. Her collection of more than 300 African American cookbooks has been exhibited at the James Beard House, and she has been invited to the White House twice to participate in Michelle Obama's programs to raise a healthier generation of kids. Now, Tipton-Martin's second cookbook, *Jubilee*, has hit the shelves and has already been named one of fall's best cookbooks by *The New York Times*.

African American cooking is almost always talked about as soul food, and in Tipton-Martin's hands, the history of this food unfolds as one of skill, ingenuity, adaptation, and inspiration. Throughout her career, Tipton-Martin has shed new light on the history and depth of African American cuisine. She has introduced readers to black cooks who established much of what's considered to be our national cuisine.

In *Jubilee*, Tipton-Martin brings these masters into our kitchens. Through recipes and stories, we cook along with these pioneering figures, from enslaved chefs to middle and upper-class writers and entrepreneurs. With more than 100 recipes, *Jubilee* presents techniques, ingredients, and dishes that show the roots of African American cooking—deeply beautiful, culturally diverse, fit for celebration.

*Jubilee* kicks off with an introduction and “about the recipes” section where Tipton-Martin welcomes readers to her collection of delicious recipes. Readers are then welcomed into the first chapter, “Appetizers: Food for Company.” Recipes include Spiced Potato and Plantain Chips, Orange-Glazed Chicken Wings, Sweet Potato Biscuits with Ham, and Crab Cakes.

The next chapter is filled with beverages and is titled “Liquified Soul.” Tipton-Martin notes, “Water we need to survive. Juice and milk nourish. But spirits manipulate the soul; some soothe, others stimulate.” Non-alcoholic beverages in *Jubilee* include Ginger Punch, Sorrel (Hibiscus) Tea, Calypso Coffee, and Creole Café Au Lait. Cocktails range from Champagne Cocktail to Planters Punch, Rum Punch, Apple Hot Toddy, and Mint Juleps.

After a couple drinks, sit through the pages of “Breads: The Stuff of Life.” This chapter includes breads like Buttermilk Biscuits and Quick Cinnamon Rolls, Old Fashion Pancakes and Homemade Pancake Syrup to go along with them, Extra-Light Buttermilk Cornbread, Blueberry Muffins, and Sweet Potato Bread.

The next chapter includes “Soups and Salads: For the Welcome Table” and contains hearty and delicious soups and salads that everyone will love. Choose from soups like Corn and Potato Chowder with Crab, Seafood Gumbo, Crawfish Bisque, or Gumbo Z’Herbs. The salads throughout these pages are more than just leafy greens and dressing. Choose from Broccoli and Cauliflower Salad, White Mixed Greens with Bacon, Okra Salad, Layered Green Salad with Garlic and Herb Dressing, and Country-Style Potato Salad.

No meal is complete without an array of sides, and the “Sides and Vegetables” chapter is full of flavorful side dishes that everyone will love. Flip through pages of classic, Southern recipes that include Baked Barbecued Beans, Black Eyed Peas and Rice, Louisiana Red Beans and Rice, Jambalaya, Baked Macaroni and Cheese, Cornbread Dressing, Corn Pudding, Collard Greens, and Sweet Potato Casserole.

Don't fill up on sides and appetizers, though, because the “Main Dishes” chapter is full of classic recipes that are just as hearty and tasty. No matter what the occasion, readers will find the perfect main course throughout the pages of *Jubilee*. Recipes include Coffee-Scented Short Ribs Braised in Red Wine, Roasted Leg of Lamb, Barbecued Pork Shoulder, Oven Baked Ribs, Chicken and Dumplings, Homestyle Fried Chicken, Catfish Étouffée, and Louisiana Barbecued Shrimp.

The “Desserts” chapter rounds things out in *Jubilee*, and whether you need a dessert for a dinner party, holiday, special occasion, or just because, Tipton-Martin has you covered. Sweet treats include Devil’s Food Cake, Pound Cake, Caramel Cake, Tea Cakes, Bread Pudding with Whiskey Sauce, Pralines, Southern Pecan Pie Laced with Whiskey, and Lemon Meringue Pie.

Throughout the pages of *Jubilee*, Tipton-Martin not only shares recipes, but she also shares different stories and experiences in between recipes and chapters of her cookbook. Her first book, *The Jemima Code*, opened a conversation in the food world about the role of black cooks in American food, and she continues that conversation throughout the pages of *Jubilee*.
Excerpt from Jubilee:

Booker T. Washington spent nine years of his life confined to a tobacco plantation in the Virginia piedmont, but he went on to become a noted author, orator, and founder of the Tuskegee Institute. In his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, a vivid retelling of his upbringing in a cabin that doubled as the plantation kitchen house and the sweet potato bank, he described his passion for ginger cakes: “I saw my two young mistresses and some lady visitors eating ginger cakes . . . those cakes seemed to me to be absolutely the most tempting and desirable things that I had ever seen; and I then and there resolved that, if I ever got free, the height of my ambition would be . . . to eat ginger cakes in the way that I saw those young ladies doing.”

African American cookbooks also carry on the ginger cake tradition—from the “old-time ginger cake” Abby Fisher baked in 1881 to author Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor’s gingerbread in the 2001 cookbook *Vertamae Cooks in the Americas’ Family Kitchen*. Verta dedicated the recipe to Booker T. Washington in a 2001 NPR interview to celebrate June 19, 1865.

Juneteenth, as the day is known, is the day that the enslaved in Texas learned that the Emancipation Proclamation had set them free.

The essentials for gingerbread are usually the same: flour, butter, sugar, eggs, spices, and molasses baked until dark and lovely. You can experiment with sweeteners such as cane syrup, maple syrup, honey, and sorghum molasses, or try moistening the gingerbread batter with different liquids, such as coffee, milk, or buttermilk. Despite the name, gingerbread’s mahogany crumb is light and cake-like, not at all dense like pumpkin, banana, or other quick breads.

This is my version of the recipe, developed with chef Joe Randall, which we published in *A Taste of Heritage: The New African-American Cuisine*. It is sweet and moist, fragrant with the scent of ginger and the distinctly bold flavor of molasses.

Serve this gingerbread with a dollop of sweet Bourbon Chantilly Cream or a light garnish of warm Lemon Sauce.
GINGERBREAD WITH LEMON SAUCE

by Toni Tipton-Martin

Serves 12 to 15

Butter or shortening for the pan
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for the pan
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup molasses
1 cup boiling-hot coffee
1 stick (4 ounces) butter, melted
1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar
2 large eggs, beaten

Lemon Sauce (recipes follow), for serving

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly coat a 13 x 9-inch baking pan with butter or shortening. Dust with flour, tapping out the excess.

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. In a bowl or measuring cup, stir together the molasses and coffee.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the melted butter, brown sugar, and eggs on medium speed until light. Beat in the flour mixture in three additions, alternating with the coffee molasses mixture, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then beat for 30 seconds longer.

Pour the batter into the pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30 to 45 minutes. Cool the gingerbread in the pan on a wire rack, then cut into squares and serve warm with lemon sauce or bourbon Chantilly cream.

LEMON SAUCE

Makes about 1 cup

1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 cup boiling water
2 to 3 tablespoons butter (to taste), cut into pieces, at room temperature
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
Pinch of salt

In a small saucepan, whisk together the sugar and cornstarch until well mixed. Gradually whisk in the boiling water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until the sauce is thick and resembles syrup, about 5 minutes. Add the butter, lemon zest, lemon juice, vanilla, and salt, and stir until the butter has melted. Cool to room temperature to serve.
Baby, It’s Cold Outside

When it’s cold outside, start up the fireplace, get your favorite slippers on, wrap up in a warm blanket, and snuggle on the couch with this delicious White Hot Chocolate.

WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE

courtesy of Culinary.net

3 cups half & half
2/3 cup white chocolate baking pieces
1 3-inch cinnamon stick
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
Ground cinnamon (optional)
Whipped cream (optional)

In a medium saucepan, combine 1/4 of the half and half, white chocolate baking pieces, cinnamon stick, and nutmeg. Stir over low to medium heat until white chocolate is melted.

Add remaining half and half. Stir and cook until heated through. Remove from heat. Discard cinnamon stick.

Add in vanilla and almond extract. Stir until mixed through.

Pour into your favorite mug(s). Top with whipped cream, and sprinkle with ground cinnamon.

Recipe adapted from Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook.
Located in the heart of Flora, Miss., Bill's Creole and Steak Depot has been serving up flavorful steaks, seafood dishes, crawfish, and po'boys since 2012. The steakhouse and seafood hotspot is owned and operated by Bill Steinriede, a Vicksburg native who's been in the restaurant business most of his life and takes pride in the delicious food he serves at his restaurant.

"My first restaurant job was in high school at Delta Point Restaurant in Vicksburg, the only five-star restaurant in Mississippi at the time," Steinriede said. "I got to push out the carts to do Banan's Foster and Cherry Jubilee for the customers, and I fell in love then."

From there, Steinriede attended college at Ole Miss, where he worked at Old Venice Pizza Company in Oxford and later became the manager. After he left Oxford, he went to the Starkville and Jackson locations to train employees at each restaurant and eventually became the general manager for Old Venice.

During Steinriede's time at Old Venice, Hurricane Katrina hit, and he left the restaurant business to work for FEMA on the coast for several years.

"I said I was done with the restaurant business then," Steinriede said. "But here I am."

After his work with FEMA, Steinriede made the move to Flora and eventually started working at what used to be The Crawfish Company with one of his friends. From March to October 2012, they sold crawfish by the pound, and that was all they did. Once crawfish season ended that year, The Crawfish Company was sold, and Steinriede then decided to open his own place, and Bill's has been full speed ahead ever since.

The "hole-in-the-wall" restaurant resides in what used to be an old juke joint in the middle of Flora, and Steinriede remodeled the inside before opening its doors in 2012.

"It's got character, that's for sure," he said.

Upon entering the steakhouse, customers are greeted with red picnic tablecloths on the tables, sports memorabilia-covered walls, TVs, neon signs, and there's even foosball table and an arcade game in the back room. The bar area is decorated with strands of lights to brighten up the dimly lit space, and it truly is a hole-in-the-wall with plenty of character and small-town charm.

Bill's is only open for dinner, so once you're seated at your picnic tablecloth-covered table, it would only be right to start off with a homemade appetizer. Choose from Fried
Pickles, Louisiana Boudin Balls, Fried Crab Claws, Sausage and Cheese Plate, Fried Green Tomatoes, Mozzarella Sticks, Calamari, or, a Bill's favorite, Homemade Crawfish Rolls – eggroll wraps stuffed with cream cheese, crawfish tails, and bacon.

Being that the words 'steakhouse' and 'creole' are in the name of the restaurant, Bill's knows how to do Cajun food and steaks. Steinmiede has even won awards for his gumbo and red beans and rice, so you're sure to get the real deal at Bill's. Choose from seafood and Cajun items like Award Winning Red Beans and Rice, Jambalaya, Gumbo, Crawfish Étouffée, Shrimp and Grits, Seafood Lasagna, Shrimp Pasta, Shrimp, Oyster, or Catfish Platters, or EZ Peel Shrimp. Bill's also features a popular blackened red fish dish that comes topped with lump crab meat and cream sauce, served over pasta or with your choice of side: garden salad, baked potato, home fries, or steamed vegetables.

If you visit Bill's for a nice, juicy steak, you're in luck. Choose a filet, New York strip, ribeye, or steak tips for a delicious steak dinner.
All entrees are served with a salad and French bread, and all steaks also come with your choice of side items.

During crawfish season, you can, of course, visit Bill’s for crawfish by the pound, and it’s very popular when the season hits. Bill’s even uses their own blend of spices for crawfish to make for the perfect flavor.

If you save room for dessert at Bill’s, choose from homemade treats like Banana Caramel Pie, Plain Caramel Pie, or Chocolate Chunk Caramel Pie.

Not only can you visit Bill’s for an unforgettable steak or seafood dinner, but Bill’s can also cater your next event. Whether it’s a birthday party, rehearsal dinner, banquet, or anything in between, Bill’s has you covered.

Bill’s Creole and Steak Depot is only open for dinner, so plan accordingly and make the trip to downtown Flora for a delicious steak dinner.
Support Salvation Army at 23rd Annual Souper Bowl

BY PAIGE MCKAY

Going on its 23rd year, the Salvation Army is set to host its annual Souper Bowl fundraiser on Sunday, February 2nd, at the Sparkman Auditorium at the Mississippi Ag Museum. The Salvation Army’s mission has remained the same since the day it began – to preach the gospel of Jesus and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination – and the Souper Bowl helps accomplish that mission.

The annual event features soups and desserts donated by several local restaurants, and local celebrities volunteer to serve during the event. Past servers have included many Jackson area TV and radio personalities and Miss Mississippi and Miss Mississippi Teen USA, along with several other familiar faces. In the past, Souper Bowl-goers have enjoyed soup from places all over the metro area like Amerigo, Georgia Blue, Iron Horse Grill, Newk’s, Sombra, Local 463, and several other local favorites. There will even be soup for purchase from a handful of vendors.

Attendees can taste as many soups and desserts as they please, and they are encouraged to hang out to enjoy entertainment like live music, a silent auction, games, and a tailgate tent from which they can purchase different gifts and goodies to take to Super Bowl parties they might be attending later on in the evening.

Tickets to the Souper Bowl are $25 for adults and $10 for children. Each adult ticket purchased includes a handmade, collectible bowl from The Mustard Seed, another local non-profit organization. All proceeds from ticket sales go toward helping Salvation Army shelters and families in need. Last year’s event was attended by over 400 people, including the Governor and First Lady, and over $46,000 was raised.

Kick off your Super Bowl Sunday with Salvation Army and help them exceed last year’s money raised. The event kicks off at 11 a.m., just in time for lunch, and tickets can be purchased at salvationarmy.org/Jackson. Tickets can also be purchased the day of the event at the door.
December 5-18
Gingerbread Village
- Oxford -

Take a break from your busy day, and relax in the quiet and calm of a magical village made of gingerbread. Located at the Ford Center on the campus of the University of Mississippi, the Village is free and open to the public December 5-18. The Gingerbread Village supports local food banks and visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to donate. For more information, visit www.fordcenter.org.

December 7
Santa Plate & Cookie Decorating Class For Kids
- Ocean Springs -

Chef Robin Pate & Ceramics teacher Anita Weems from St. Martin High School are collaborating on this super Santa class for your littles. Kids will make and decorate a dozen Christmas cookies from scratch and paint a Santa plate that will then be ‘fired’ for later pick up. For more information and to sign up, visit www.themaryc.org.

December 6
Holiday Christmas Luncheon
- Natchez -

Join the Natchez Garden Club by bringing in the holiday season with this year’s Holiday Christmas Luncheon and Soup & Casserole Sale. The event will be held at Magnolia Hall on Friday, December 6th, from 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tickets are $20 and on sale through the NGC office. Visit www.natchezgardenclub.org to learn more and to purchase tickets.

December 8
Holiday Sparkling Wine Tasting
- Jackson -

Come find a new favorite sparkling wine just in time to celebrate the holidays at BRAVO's first tasting, “Holiday Sparkling Wines” on December 8th at 4 p.m. Long-time BRAVO! friend Val Spellman will join the party for the evening as you explore these delicious bubbles. Tickets are $50 per person, and seating is limited, so be sure to reserve yours as soon as possible. For more information or to purchase your ticket, visit www.bravobuzz.com.

To have your food festival or culinary event included in future issues, please contact us at info@eatdrinkmississippi.com. All submissions are subject to editor’s approval.
December 8
Gingerbread House Family Decorating Workshop
- Gulfport -

Looking for something fun to do with holiday guests in town? Take the whole family to the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center and decorate a gingerbread house together without all of the mess. They will provide the fresh and tasty unassembled gingerbread house pieces, frosting, and all of the edible decorations. Hot cocoa, cookies, and holiday music will make this a memorable family experience. Space is limited, so claim your spot today at www.lmnc.org. Cost is $30 for members and $35 for non-members.

December 14
Decorate Cookies with Santa
- Brandon -

Head out to McClain Lodge on Saturday, December 14th, from 10 am to 2 pm and decorate cookies with Santa Claus. Kids of all ages are encouraged to decorate sugar cookies and drop off their final Christmas lists and letters with Santa. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/McClainExperience.

December 13
Sip 'n Cider
- Hernando -

Hernando Main Street Chamber of Commerce presents Sip 'n Cider, a night to shop around for Christmas presents while sipping on delicious cider. Each participating shop will be preparing and serving their own blend of hot cider. Visit surrounding businesses to eat, shop, mix and mingle, register for door prizes, and vote on your favorite cider. For more information, visit www.hernandoms.org.

December 15
Holiday Charcuterie Hands-On Class
- Ocean Springs -

Meat and cheese boards have become a staple on many restaurant menus, and they are also the perfect entertaining plate. Join Michael Paolelli of Food, Booze & Hiccups as he describes the types of meats, cheeses, pickles, fruits, jams, and more that can be added to your charcuterie board. For more information and to secure your spot, visit www.themaryc.org.

December 14
Christmas Pastry Sale
- Biloxi -

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Biloxi will hold their annual Christmas Pastry Sale on December 14th from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Every holiday season for over 30 years, Greek pastries, Greek bread, and Spanakopita (spinach rolls), along with delicacies from additional countries, have been sold at Holy Trinity to the people along the Coast of Mississippi. Different pastries may be ordered by the box (6 or 12 pieces), along with special assortment boxes. In addition to the pastries and breads, there are canned and dry goods available from the “Greek Store.” Orders are taken in advance, so order soon for Christmas. For more information, visit www.holytrinitybiloxi.org or contact George Yurchak at 228-831-5820.

December 17
Christmas Tapas & Toddies
- Ocean Springs -

This class is all about the ‘little bites’ of food and cocktails of Christmas. Join Chef Michael and Stephanie Paolelli on December 17th from 6 to 8 p.m. for hands-on appetizers for Christmas, and learn how to make delicious cocktails, too. Tickets are $35 for members and $40 for non-members. For more information and to secure your spot, visit www.themaryc.org.
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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.  
(Signed) J.J. Carney, Publisher

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eat. drink. MISSISSIPPI

www.instagram.com/eatdrinkmississippi

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020
Almost 1 in 4 Mississippians — about 690,000 people — don’t have enough to eat.
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Do culinary terms confuse you? Can you look at a piece of cooked chicken and say with certainty, “That bird right there has been fricassée?” (The bigger question might be, can you even fricasse anything besides a rabbit?) What is braising anyway? If you were in a desperate situation (imagine Gordon Ramsay on his crankiest of days) and were ordered to braise a piece of beef, would that be a panic moment, or is braising a breeze? And what about confit? I know it has something to do with cooking meat in its own fat, but don’t you need to cook it first to render the fat? How does that work?

These days it’s easy to find answers to these important questions, thanks to the world-wide interweb. In other words, I didn’t know, either, so I Googled for all. Here’s the rundown.

To fricassée meat is to cook it in oil or fat at such a low temperature that it doesn’t get brown. In the traditional French method, the meat is often served in a white sauce of some sort. The finished product is basically a white stew. According to one source, young pigeons or liver used to be the stars of this method back in the day. I don’t know how you keep liver “white,” and my grocery store doesn’t carry pigeons in the poultry department, so I’ll probably stick to chicken.

Braising isn’t that complicated, as it turns out. Brown the meat, then cook it at a low temperature in a liquid for a few hours. It’s like fricassée in reverse. Sort of.

Confit, for example, means to preserve something. Before refrigeration, one of the ways to keep meat from spoiling was to cook it low and slow in fat, then store it in that same fat, which acts as a bacterial barrier. Fat fights bad bacteria. Hmmm...I should never be sick.

Since we’re picking on the French (all in good fun, mes amis), there’s another term that comes up every now and then that can be perplexing. If you just saw the word mirepoix in a recipe, would you be able to make it yourself? Thankfully, though my local grocery is woefully short of pigeon, they do have bags of mirepoix in the frozen vegetable section. If you’ve heard of the Cajun Holy Trinity, this is similar. And, I’ll confess I get this Holy Trinity confused sometimes - forgivable, perhaps, because the real Holy Trinity can be a little hard to explain, too. Mirepoix is a mix of onions, carrots, and celery, and you’ll probably see that in a braising recipe, which is great because we know what braising is now. The Holy Trinity (the kitchen version) is onions, green pepper, and celery. Very close. Those French are tricky.

If you’ll allow me to divert from French terms just a moment, s’il vous plaît, I’ll throw in another threesome I learned about in an exhibit at the Museum of Mississippi History. Ever heard of the Three Sisters? Corn, beans, and squash make up these siblings, which, apparently, form a nutritionally-complete diet, and also help each other grow. Bonus food history lesson. Back to Paris.

For those who watch a lot of food television, you may have heard the phrase, “mise en place.” It essentially means putting things in place, or having everything in place. It’s kinda’ like reading the whole recipe before starting to cook; if you don’t do that, you’re liable to find yourself in a predicament on step four, when you discover you were supposed to fricassé something yesterday and let it sit in its own fat overnight.

Mise en place is actually getting everything you need (ingredients and tools) out and measured before you start. Why? Because you think there is a bottle of smoked paprika in the cabinet that your dad’s friend brought back from a trip to Hungary, but after you used it the last time, your wife put it away in what seemed like a logical place. However, it wasn’t the logical place you would have chosen. Or perhaps your kids unloaded the dishwasher this week and none of the teaspoon measures (because you have five of them scattered about) end up in the appointed measuring spoon section of gadget drawer number two.

As you can probably tell, for me, it more often means “mess in place.” My wife can testify, as I tend to bounce around the kitchen in a panic due to the aforementioned situations, letting fly an occasional Baptist-approved cuss word when the garlic press has vanished into thin air. I guess the French aren’t so bad after all.
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