



Italian Nice With A Touch Of Cajun Spice

In the late 1800's, Sicily endured some rough times, causing many natives to leave the Italian Island. Sicilians took ships to the major ports of the United States, with many staying in the country's second-largest port, New Orleans. Living on an island meant many Sicilians made their living as fishermen, and their diet reflected this. Being close to the sea is one of the reasons so many Sicilians didn't move further inland.

The Sicilians brought their culture and cuisine with them upon immigration, particularly an Italian-style tomato sauce. Just as she absorbed the French and Spanish before them, New Orleans absorbed the Italians. New Orleanians took the idea of Italian-style tomato sauce and mixed it with roux, the flour-and-grease base for sauces. Over time, the classic "red sauce" became "red gravy," called that to distinguish it from the "brown gravy" New Orleanians made for generations. To make the distinction between traditional cuisine and the modified style of Italians raised in New Orleans, some restaurants and restaurant reviewers began to refer to the modified style as "Creole-Italian" cooking.

An obvious homegrown Italian contribution to the cuisine of the Crescent City is the muffuletta, a hearty sandwich of salami and provolone topped with a distinctive olive salad. Muffulettas, found at delis across the country, originated at Central Grocery on Decatur St. in the Quarter, a store that is still selling them to this day. Another great example of Creole-Italian fusion is the change that happened to the classic Italian recipe for scampi. Since there were no scampi here, Italian cooks used the plentiful local Gulf shrimp instead. This dish evolved into a new dish: the spicy, buttery and misnamed "barbecue shrimp". The dish spread to restaurants and homes and is now one of the most famous New Orleans dishes.

Slap Ya Mama is a big fan of the fusion between different cultures and our array of spices and sauces are excellent at bridging that gap. Add Slap Ya Mama Original Blend Seasoning to your favorite Italian dishes to create Creole-Italian fusion in your own kitchen or check out some of the recipes we have created. Let us know some of your favorite Creole-Italian fusion recipes in the comments!