

Jenny's Cajun Chicken & Sausage Gumbo

This is the kind of gumbo you find in the southern-most parts of Louisiana because of its thick broth and deep, rich, spicy flavor.

Serves 8-10 people

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 large white onion, chopped
- 2 pounds of sausage sliced into bite size pieces (Eckrich Skinless is my favorite to use, homemade or local smoked sausage works great too)
- 1 package of 'whole chicken cut up' (has bones) – throw away any innards, remove skin and fat, rinse with water
- 3 cans of Trappey's Creole Okra Gumbo, drained (if not available, substitute with any canned okra)
- ½ Tbsp Cayenne Pepper
- 1 Tsp Salt
- ½ Tsp Pepper
- ¼ Tsp Garlic powder (optional)
- ¼ Tsp Lemon Pepper (optional)
- 1 bunch of scallions (green onions), chopped
- Box of Saltine Crackers (to serve with gumbo)
- Tabasco (to serve with gumbo)
- 6 - 8 Servings of rice (cook to package directions; to serve with gumbo)

Directions:

Cook the rice to package directions. You will need a large stew pot in order to cook the gumbo. Fill the pot with just enough water to cover the chicken, about a little more than 1 gallon (too much water upfront will make a watery end product - you can always add water later if needed). Boil the water over high heat and place chicken into pot. Continue to boil and stir occasionally to keep chicken evenly cooked.

Homemade roux is difficult to make, and can take practice to get it just to your liking. If you burn the roux (see black/burnt spots in mixture), you will need to start over. For this recipe, we are aiming for a dark, thick roux. It should have a dark brown color and consistency of no-bean can chili by the end of cooking.

While the chicken is cooking, begin to heat up ¾ cup of the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Once oil is heated, test it by dropping a pinch of flour into the oil to ensure it is not too hot. You want a very light sizzle upon contact.

Adjust heat as necessary, and when ready, add 1 cup of flour. The entire cooking time for roux can take 35 minutes. You must stir constantly the entire time to prevent the roux from burning using a wooden paddle or spatula (rubber spatulas may melt if used). During the first 10-15 minutes, slowly add the leftover flour to grow and thicken the mixture and keep it congealed by slowly adding the remaining oil. The roux will slowly change from light brown and will steadily get darker and thicker.

When you are about 5 minutes away from the roux being done (it's just about the right color and texture), add in the chopped white onions, stirring constantly for 5 minutes. Remove the roux pan from heat and continue to stir for 1-2 minutes until it is cool enough to not burn sitting in the pan. Set aside on unused burner. Lower the heat on the pot with the chicken to a soft boil. Add the roux directly into the pot with the water and chicken and continue to stir. Bring pot to a moderate boil and stir until roux is completely dissolved into the water.

Next, add the sausage and okra into the pot. Maintain a light to moderate boil for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set heat to low and allow gumbo to sit without bubbling for a few minutes. As the gumbo sits, any excess oil/fat will float to the top and create a layer. Using a spoon, skim excess oil off the top and discard of the oil properly (you should be able to skim about a cup's worth). Taste the broth by getting a sample with a spoon (Be careful - it will be extremely hot, no joke!). Stir in the seasonings (salt, pepper, cayenne, garlic powder, lemon pepper). Add water and/or seasonings if desired until gumbo flavor and consistency is to your liking.

Remove all of the chicken using tongs and shred meat into bite size pieces (by now it should be cooked thoroughly and falling off the bone). Throw away the bones. Toss the chicken back into the pot and stir. Turn the heat off the gumbo pot.

When ready to serve, throw the scallions into the pot and stir. You want them added at the very end so they are bright green and fresh. Put some rice into serving bowls and using a ladle, pour gumbo over rice (make sure to get chicken from the bottom because it sinks). Serve with Tabasco and crackers.

Any leftover gumbo can be frozen or refrigerated (refrigerate rice separately). In my experience, the gumbo gets even tastier after spending a day in the fridge and reheated for leftovers.

ENJOY!