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What's Cookin' in Cajun Country

Lake Charles, La. (February 27, 2015) --- Food tourism is growing exponentially, according to the 2013 American Culinary Traveler Report by Mandala Research. In fact, 39 million U.S. leisure travelers choose a destination based on availability of culinary activities. Luckily, Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana is famous for its Cajun French and Creole recipes, delicious seafood and jam-packed festival calendar where culinary magic combines with musical tradition for a cultural immersion.

Good food in Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana is prepared by people who know what to do with the bounty that nature provides. Southwest Louisiana's culinary traditions stem from Native Americans, French, German, Cajun and Creole cultures who settled in the region.

Being in such close proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, piney woods, and prairie lands enabled the settlers to be expert fisherman, skilled waterfowl hunters, and harvesters of rice and crawfish. Smoked tasso, oyster pie, jambalaya, gumbo, crawfish étouffée, shrimp creole, roasted duck, and fried catfish were and still are staples in many cast-iron pots.

These influences also brought boudin to the area! It's a blend of pork, liver, rice, onions, parsley and dry seasonings stuffed into a casing. The best way to taste this local favorite is by travelling the Southwest Louisiana Boudin Trail and visiting the 27 different mom and pop shops, grocery stores and even gas stations.

Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana is also a proud community of local producers of fruits and vegetables, meats, honey, jams, and spices. These commodities and more can all be found at local farmer's markets.

Truth is, no matter what you are craving, Southwest Louisiana has a treat for you and it's sure to please. Especially since these recipes and meals come from a culture of passionate people who love to have fun and live off the land.

Check out the Culinary Trails Taste-umentary YouTube video that celebrates the local food scene and features local restaurants at www.visitlakecharles.org/seafood.

To learn more about Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana, check out www.visitlakecharles.org or call 800-456-7952.

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