

# HISTORIC LINKS



Grazing along Southwest Louisiana's new Boudin Trail

Boudin takes its place alongside Louisiana's more well-known fare like gumbo, jambalaya and etouffe.

COURTESY OF SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA CVB

BY HOPE S. PHILBRICK

**B**uffalo, N.Y. has beef on weck. Montréal, Québec has poutine. Myrtle Beach, S.C. has chicken bog. And with the recent debut of its new epicurean tourism trail, Southwest Louisiana proudly embraces its own unique culinary tradition: boudin.

Boudin (which is pronounced boo-dan) itself is definitely not new in the region, but the trail concept is. With 17 destinations in eight towns across Calcasieu Parish, driving the trail can take a day—or longer if you savor every bite and listen to the various producers share their unique recipe's background story.

"Boudin could be called the spiced-hybrid cousin of beef or pork sausage," says Eric Cormier, food columnist for the American Press Newspaper Lake Charles. A Southwest Louisiana native, foodie and boudin fan, Cormier helped local tourism officials create the Boudin Trail and authored the Boudin Trail brochure.

There are many different varieties of boudin, which is made of pork, beef, shrimp, crawfish and/or alligator meat plus rice, onions,

parsley and dry seasonings, all mixed together and stuffed into casings. It's mostly rice and can be mild or spicy, boiled or smoked, left in links or rolled into balls and fried. "It's a true fusion food item that melds the best from Cajun, German and Creole culinary traditions and traces its history back to Canada by way of France," says Cormier. (My personal guess is that it was actually created by an innovative mother who stuffed some remaining jambalaya into a sausage casing, merely as a way to make her family members think they weren't eating leftovers.) In Southwest Louisiana, boudin is consumed at any meal and also as a snack. "My own personal fix is driving trips," admits Cormier. "If I go to Shreveport, Dallas, Memphis or wherever, my road food is two pounds of boudin and Coke."

"Everybody has their own different recipe," Cormier adds. "Small little towns have their own style. No two places are the same. I found while listening to folks telling the stories about the boudin and how the recipes came to be in their families that it maybe goes back four to five generations. It's interesting. Boudin has always been a very strong part of the culture here." In Southwest Louisiana, boudin is routinely made by home cooks and is also readily available at small convenience stores, butcher shops and restaurants.

The new Boudin Trail helps celebrate that history, and makes it easier for visitors and locals to locate producers. "For years, all of us down here took boudin for granted," says Cormier. "But a couple of years ago, a few of us got together brainstorming at the Convention and Visitors Bureau and talked about ways to combine food with culture. The next thing you know, I went on the road with a photographer for three days and put the brochure together." Since the brochure has been published, additional boudin vendors have been identified and will be included in future updated editions of the brochure.

The biggest surprise about the Boudin Trail has been the positive response from locals. "It's kind of like people just didn't know what they had until we packaged it," says Cormier. "So many locals have gone on the tour—they just take their family on a day drive. And they live here in Calcasieu Parish!"

Such is the appeal of boudin. After all, as Cormier says, "It's rustic, simple and delicious—not pretentious." Or, as Lake Charles resident Joe Richardson explains, in this region, "Boudin is always part of a seven-course meal: a yard of boudin and a six-pack of beer." But, hey, food doesn't have to be gourmet to be good. **SP**



A boudin link at Hackett's Cajun Kitchen

HOPE S. PHILBRICK

## WHERE TO EAT BOUDIN

### IN LAKE CHARLES, LA.

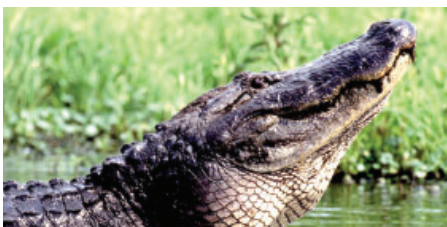
- **Brown's Neighborhood Market**  
337-905-3013
- **Hackett's Cajun Kitchen**  
337-474-3731  
[www.hackettscajunkitchen.com](http://www.hackettscajunkitchen.com)

### IN MARIETTA, GA.

- **Cajun Meat Company**  
2207 Roswell Road NE, Suite 200  
770-321-4300  
[www.cajunmeatcompany.com](http://www.cajunmeatcompany.com)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana CVB**  
[www.visitlakecharles.org](http://www.visitlakecharles.org)



Alligator is just one type of meat that can be used in boudin—and it's surprisingly tasty!

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