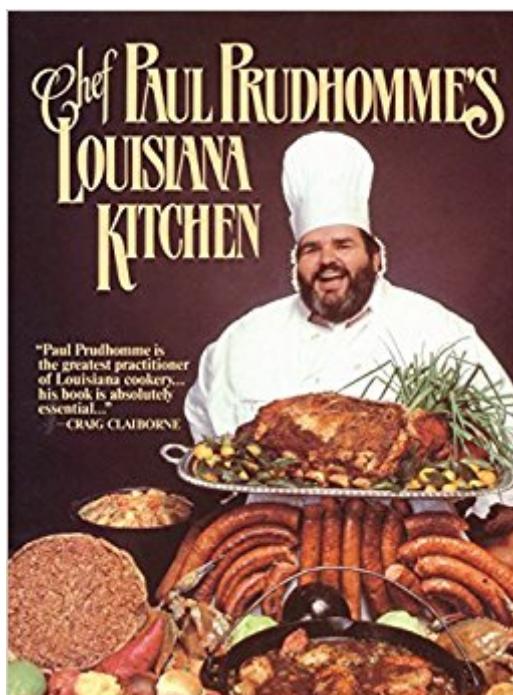


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# Chef Paul Prudhomme's Louisiana Kitchen



## Synopsis

Here for the first time the famous food of Louisiana is presented in a cookbook written by a great creative chef who is himself world-famous. The extraordinary Cajun and Creole cooking of South Louisiana has roots going back over two hundred years, and today it is the one really vital, growing regional cuisine in America. No one is more responsible than Paul Prudhomme for preserving and expanding the Louisiana tradition, which he inherited from his own Cajun background. Chef Prudhomme's incredibly good food has brought people from all over America and the world to his restaurant, K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen, in New Orleans. To set down his recipes for home cooks, however, he did not work in the restaurant. In a small test kitchen, equipped with a home-size stove and utensils normal for a home kitchen, he retested every recipe two and three times to get exactly the results he wanted. Logical though this is, it was an unprecedented way for a chef to write a cookbook. But Paul Prudhomme started cooking in his mother's kitchen when he was a youngster. To him, the difference between home and restaurant procedures is obvious and had to be taken into account. So here, in explicit detail, are recipes for the great traditional dishes--gumbos and jambalayas, Shrimp Creole, Turtle Soup, Cajun "Popcorn," Crawfish Etouffee, Pecan Pie, and dozens more--each refined by the skill and genius of Chef Prudhomme so that they are at once authentic and modern in their methods. Chef Paul Prudhomme's Louisiana Kitchen is also full of surprises, for he is unique in the way he has enlarged the repertoire of Cajun and Creole food, creating new dishes and variations within the old traditions. Seafood Stuffed Zucchini with Seafood Cream Sauce, Pan-fried Chicken and Fettucini, Veal and Oyster Crepes, Artichoke Prudhomme--these and many others are newly conceived recipes, but they could have been created only by a Louisiana cook. The most famous of Paul Prudhomme's original recipes is Blackened Redfish, a daringly simple dish of fiery Cajun flavor that is often singled out by food writers as an example of the best of new American regional cooking. For Louisianians and for cooks everywhere in the country, this is the most exciting cookbook to be published in many years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This spectacular cookbook beats out even Julia Child for one special thing: no matter what he tells you, do it. Cajun cooking is based on a number of principles not all of which are normal in the French-American styles dominant in most cookbooks, and which still aren't normal in the Asian-influenced or Italianate cookbooks that have increasingly garnered attention. Loooong cooking times, in some cases. Very high heat. Complicated sauces. Intricate spicing. Cooking "the hell out of" some ingredients. These things are antithetical to Chinese, Japanese, French, Italian, and Spanish cooking, from which come almost everything you might think you know about cooking. The whole concept, in so many cases, is to "bring out the true flavor" of some ingredient, which prompts all that "fresh and perfect" stuff about ingredients. All of which is grand, of course, but a little arch, don't you think? This kind of Cajun country cooking, however, often takes unwanted ingredients, or ones that are a tad old, and makes something spectacular out of them. Looks like hell, tastes like heaven: it's brown and gooey, but by god you'll get down on your knees and beg to be allowed just a little more! Now if you're an accomplished home cook and you've never cooked this type of cuisine, you're going to find instructions that you will naturally want to ignore. The Sweet Potato Pecan Pie, for example, has you bake it for something like an hour, at high heat. So quite naturally, you assume it's a typo or something and you "correct" it in the cooking. DO NOT DO THIS. My wife did this with that pie, and it was very good. I did exactly what I was told and it was spectacular, just absolutely to die for. Here's some examples. Barbecue shrimp.

Later on in his career, Chef Paul Prudhomme took up low fat cooking to save his life. However, this book was written before he got "religion" and is not for the fat-conscious. Having said that, can there be anything in this book for people who do not wish to eat a lot of fat? The answer is "yes" and here is why: Chef Prudhomme gives a very useful set of techniques to maximize the flavors that make the complex spice bouquet of real Louisiana cuisine. As an example, I have used the Jambalaya recipe in this book many times. It is different from most recipes for this rice-sausage-and-meat cassarole. Prudhomme's version is served with a wonderful spicy tomato sauce surrounding a

molded cupful of the rice mix. This is a very elegant presentation, adds moisture and flavor to the dish...and allows you to substitute ingredients and still get the sense of the genuine thing. (I use turkey Kielbasa, cut way down on the oil and use lean chicken breast for the meat.) The sauce is what makes this work so well. Chef Prudhomme recommends "building" flavors by adding spices and herbs in stages. Some at the beginning, sautéed at first, some later on near the end, to freshen the taste. He also makes a very important instruction about the mirepoix mix--the onion, green bell pepper and celery base of many Cajun and Creole dishes. He says it's best to cut the vegetables, especially the bell pepper, very fine as that preserves the taste. It's true. Larger pieces of pepper taste bitter and flabby. This kind of advice makes Prudhomme's book extremely useful. If you follow the flavor building advice, you can cut out a lot of the fat and substitute lean meats and still get good results from this book.

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