

# Southern Cuisine

By

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## Acknowledgements

I always hate trying to list everyone I want to thank, because I always leave people out that I did not mean to leave out. The two people I never forget are my daughter Elizabeth and YOU my reader. Thank You!

THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ALL OF THE CHARACTERS AND EVENTS IN THIS WORK ARE EITHER CREATED FROM THE AUTHOR'S IMAGINATION OR ARE USED FICTIONALLY (OR THEY SHOULD BE).

THANK YOU.



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## Southern Cuisine

Thanks to American expatriates living in Paris, we typically think of expatriates as people who live away from their homeland because they do not like their homeland. However, an expatriate is simply someone who is living in exile; this can be either forced or voluntary. I am a southern expatriate who very much thinks of himself as a proud Southerner. I moved north almost 25 years ago after accepting a job offer, on leaving the Navy, and have pined for the South ever since.

There are many things I miss about living in the South; none more than the food. Let's face it; Yankees just do not know how to cook. I never order grits in the North even if they are on the menu (which they usually are not). Grits in the North are usually instant grits, which no self-respecting Southerner would ever eat. There is a restaurant on [I-75 in Kentucky](#) about halfway through the state where I stop every trip south to end my grits fast. It is the first

restaurant I come to which offers a genuine southern breakfast, 24 hours a day. I always order grits, bacon, and eggs sunny side up. I dice the bacon and eggs, and thoroughly mix them into my grits... aaaahhhhhh. Some people like to add a touch of sorghum, I do not.

I do like sorghum. While most people drown their pancakes in maple syrup, I find a few drops of sorghum on each pancake will cure any sweet tooth. I brought a bottle of sorghum back from [South Carolina](#) on one of my trips home. That same bottle has been sitting under my counter since before my daughter was born. Sorghum has a longer shelf life than nuclear waste and unlike sugar and other syrups, just a few drops is all you need.

However, there is more to southern cuisine than grits and sorghum. As my "Uncle" Bobby says, "In the South we use every part of the pig but the squeal." Which brings me to some southern foods I will not eat. If it's green and boiled I pass. Also, I like bacon, pork chops, ham, and ham steaks. However, I leave the rest of the pig to my compatriots.

I have to say my favorite is [boiled peanuts](#) (just above black-eyed peas and rice). Not only can you not get boiled peanuts in the North, most people in the North have never heard of boiled peanuts; and have no idea what you're talking about.

The normal way to acquire boiled peanuts is to find a pickup truck on the side of a country road somewhere with the tailgate down. If someone is sitting on that tailgate, legs dangling over the edge, then you have come to the right place. The boiled peanuts are in the small brown paper bags stacked to one side near the tailgate (sometimes they are in small coffee cans). However, a Southerner in exile takes what he can get. Once, my wife found a can of boiled peanuts at a grocery store on the "scratch and dent" shelf. I saved that can for months until she finally threatened to throw it out. Then, with great ceremony, I opened my can and held court from my couch in front of the TV on a Saturday afternoon. The occasion I chose to enjoy this tantalizing, mouth-watering treat was equally momentous. I watched an [SEC football](#) team whip up on a Big 10 football team (which usually happens when these two conferences meet). In [Columbus Ohio](#), most Buckeye fans think that all college football teams in the South are part of the SEC, they are not. They also seem to think that the Gators, Hurricanes, and Seminoles are all one team. Please do not be harsh, you need to understand Buckeye fans; they live in a state that is so poor they can only afford one good college football team.

Ah, but football is another story, back to my tale.

I remember as a small boy growing up in the South we had [general stores](#). General stores were similar to our convenience stores today, except the general stores had a wider selection of products for sale. I can remember going to the back row where all the products were covered in 3 inches of dust and 30-year-old price tags (price tags which the clerk would honor). I would walk up and down those aisles just to see what I could find. Another great feature of the old general store is the large glass and wood display cases near the cash register. This was where I found penny candy, which the clerk would dutifully put in a very small brown paper bag for me to take home. On top of the display cases were always large pickle jars filled with pickles, pickled eggs, pickled pig ears, and pickled pig's feet (along with anything else the proprietor could think of to pickle). These I also passed up.

As a small boy, my brother Jeff and I lived a 30 min. walk from the nearest general store. We would leave our home and walk all the way down the road to the general store, Jeff on one side of the road and me on the other. This was before the TV commercials with the Indian who looked at the trash alongside the road and cried. So, we could leave our house broke and with just the soft drink bottles we found along the roadside (three cents for a pint bottle, five cents for quart bottle, no metric back then) purchase a feast at the general store. This usually meant an [RC Cola](#) and a [Moon pie](#). I liked the chocolate Moon pies and Jeff liked the banana Moon pies. For just \$.25 we would enjoy our feast, hand the empty RC bottle back to the clerk, and sauntered back home, kings of the world or at least kings of Silver Lake.

Our general store (the Silver Lake Grocery) had a hitching rail on each side of the front door. We would sit under the hitching rail and enjoy our feast and if we got there at noontime, we shared our table with local laborers on their lunch break. I remember one time a group of men all having pickled pig's feet for lunch. Except one man, who was enjoying a pig's ear sandwich and taking considerable abuse from his coworkers. The man with the sandwich quietly took the abuse until he was finished with his sandwich and then calmly turned and looked at his friends saying, "Well at least I know where my pig's ear has been." That ended lunch.



### **Forward**

I grew up in the South and these are short stories about some of the people (black and white) who had an impact on me and the ideals they taught me. Ideals I hope to pass on to my daughter. It is about "growing up Southern." Short stories you can download for free.



## **About Joe C Combs 2nd**

Joe started life in a small town in Florida, not far from St Augustine. He has many interests in life and has quite literally traveled the world. He has worked many jobs, from field hand to field service engineer. Along the way spent almost nine years as a submarine sailor, but his favorite hat to wear is that of father to his daughter Elizabeth. He currently lives in Kansas.



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