



Photography: Kenneth Theysen



SEAFOOD AND SAUSAGE CREOLE

by Chef / Owner **Joyce de Cuba-Hüsken** of *Yemanja Woodfired Grill*

Our co-cover Chef Joyce Hüsken is known for exceptional flavors at her downtown wood-fired grill restaurant – not just in her on-point seafood and steaks, but also in her creative vegetarian and vegan dishes.

This seafood and sausage Creole dish may not be on her menu, but its herbs and spices create the bold tastes for which *Yemanja* is known. Besides, who doesn't love an excuse to flambé with bourbon?

“This dish adds a bit of a New Orleans kick to the seafood Creole that we all know and love in Aruba,” says Joyce, “and it reflects who we are as a restaurant. *Yemanja* is flavorful, it's colorful, it's bold.”

That aesthetic is reflected in the menu's Caribbean BBQ mahi-mahi fillet, the chimichurri calamari and the blackened triple tail, a juicy white-fleshed fish, which Chef Joyce grills to crispy-skinned, buttery-fleshed perfection.

The beauty of this recipe lies in the fact that you only need one pot to make it and you can add or substitute just about anything. “It's very forgiving,” she says. Can't find baby octopus? Use squid instead, or scallops, fish or even chicken – though you're not going to want to skip on the sausage or those giant shrimp.

Her favorite way to serve this quasi-gumbo is with flat bread for dunking, but you can also serve it with rice. Just remember to leave the heads on the shrimp. “That's where all the nice flavors are hidden, and it's where the spices end up,” she says. After all, without flavor, it's not *Yemanja*.

Seafood and Sausage Creole

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp. (30 ml) vegetable oil
- 2 large sausages (any kind you prefer, like andouille or spicy chorizo) cut into ½-inch slices
- ½ cup (125 ml) butter
- 1 cup (250 ml) sliced onions
- ½ cup (125 ml) sliced celery
- 1 cup (250 ml) sliced green bell pepper
- 1 cup (250 ml) halved cherry tomatoes
- 8 garlic cloves minced by hand
- 2 green jalapeños, seeded and sliced
- 2 tbsp. (12 g) Cajun spices
- 1 tbsp. (6 g) dried oregano
- 1 tsp. (2 g) chili flakes
- 1 tbsp. (6 g) paprika powder
- 2 tsp. (4 g) chili powder
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tbsp. (3 g) fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ cup (60 ml) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (125 ml) bourbon or white wine
- 2 cups (500 ml) chicken broth
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) tomato sauce
- 1 lb. (450 g) jumbo shrimp, heads on, deveined
- ½ lb. (225 g) baby octopus, heads removed
- 1 lb. (450 g) mussels, scrubbed
- 1 lime, juiced
- ¼ cup (60 ml) chopped parsley, plus more to garnish
- Salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste



Instructions

1. In a large frying pan, heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat and fry the sausage until browned.
2. Add the butter and onions and sweat until glazed, about 2 minutes.
3. Add the celery, bell pepper, thyme, cherry tomatoes, green jalapeños and garlic and cook for 3 to 4 minutes.
4. Add the dry spices and flour and stir to coat.
5. Add the bourbon, remove the pot from the direct heat and ignite the alcohol carefully with the flame of the stove or a barbecue lighter if using an electric rather than gas stove.
6. When the flames dissipate, return the pot to the heat and add the chicken broth, Worcestershire sauce and tomato sauce.
7. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes.
8. Bring to a boil and add the octopus and mussels followed by the parsley and lime juice.
9. Cover and cook for 3 minutes to cook the mussels (without removing the lid). Discard any mussels that don't open.
10. Season with salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste and garnish with fresh parsley.

CHEF'S TIPS

1. For this dish, I love to use a 24-inch frying pan and 24-inch lid.
2. Always make sure you have a lid nearby when flambéing, in case the flames go higher than expected!
3. Measure all the ingredients and chop the vegetables before you turn on the heat. Good prep is half the work.
4. Mincing the garlic by hand is more effort than using a garlic press, but hand-minced pieces will burn less easily, cook more slowly and end up sweeter.
5. Look for certified sustainable shrimp.
6. The sauce tastes even better the next day, after the herbs and spices have married, says Chef Joyce – a romantic but, in this case, mercifully inexpensive endeavor.