

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Barataria-Terrebonne NEP • 504.447.0868 or 800.259.0869 • www.btnep.org • March 2001

BARATARIA-TERREBONNE ESTUARY

The Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary lies at the foot of the Mississippi River drainage basin and contains more coastal wetlands than any other estuary in the United States. In fact, Louisiana's 3.5 million acres of coastal wetlands represent about 40 percent of all coastal wetlands in the continental US. The area's wetlands and barrier islands protect the communities of south Louisiana from hurricanes, storms, and floodwaters. Civilization in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary dates from Native Americans times. Today, the region sustains the oldest French-speaking culture in America and over 600,000 residents.

FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Three of America's "top ten" highest volume ports are located here, the Ports of Baton Rouge, South Louisiana and New Orleans.
- Harvested seafood had an estimated value of more than \$220 million in 1998 and more than 10,000 jobs a year rely on the commercial fishing industry.
- Over 730 species of birds (there are 100 active bald eagle nests in the area), finfish, shellfish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, including several that are threatened or endangered, spend all or part of their life cycle in the estuary.
- The estuary contains 792,175 acres of forested wetlands and 371,574 acres of freshwater marshes.
- The state sold 353,749 freshwater and saltwater recreational fishing licenses worth more than \$324 million in fiscal year 1998-99.
- Estuary area residents leased out over 850,000 acres for hunting purposes in 1998, garnering \$2.9 million in the process.

HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Twenty-two square miles of wetlands are lost annually.
- Wetland losses along the Louisiana Coast are so pronounced that some Barataria-Terrebonne towns will require an alternative freshwater source by the year 2013.
- Scientists predict that beach erosion rates could reach 120 feet in years with hurricanes.
- By the year 2040, if nothing is done to curb the current rate of erosion, the Gulf of Mexico will have moved closer to New Orleans and several towns will be under water.
- Most of the region's land area formed over the last 10,000 years; most of the land loss has occurred in the last 100.
- Habitat loss and changes, the introduction of toxins, and over-harvesting have affected the populations of the brown pelican, American alligator, bald eagle and snapping turtle.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Supports the Bayou Camps Program that develops awareness and interest among students in environmental issues by providing over 500 K-8 students with classroom and field experience.
- In 1997, Coast 2050 was initiated as a collective effort among federal and Louisiana agencies "to develop a technically sound strategic plan to sustain coastal resources and provide an integrated multiple-use approach to ecosystem management."
- Between January 1996 and June 1998, approximately 2,495 new individual sewage disposal systems for residences and camps were installed in Barataria-Terrebonne parishes.
- Leveraged funding from a diverse set of sources. It is estimated that, between 1996 and 1999, \$1,094,573 of USEPA Section 320 funds and approximately \$82,180,000 from other sources was secured to implement the Management Plan.

Fish Courtbouillion

(Koo-bee-yawn – "n" being silent)

1 cup cooking oil	1 can mushrooms	1 can tomatoes
4 bay leaves	2 large bell peppers, chopped fine	1 tbl Italian seasoning
water (approx. 2 quarts)	2 heads garlic, grated	1 can tomato sauce
flour	1 cup green onion tops, chopped	1 small jar green olives, chopped
6 lbs redfish	1/2 stalk celery, chopped fine	
2 large onions, chopped	2/3 cup parsley, chopped	Salt and red pepper to taste

Heat cooking oil in heavy pot; add flour and cook until dark golden brown. Add onions, bell pepper and celery; cook about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato sauce, olives, bay leaves, and water. Adjust amount of water according to desired thickness of gravy. Cook on medium heat about 1 1/2 hours.

Add fish (fried, precooked or raw), mushrooms and grated garlic. Cook about 1 hour.

Add onion tops, parsley, Italian seasoning, salt and water. Simmer, on low heat, slightly covered, for 1/2 hour. Serve on hot rice or spaghetti.

Note: Turtle or alligator may be used in place of the redfish.