



Celebrating our foods,
culture and traditions

African Heritage Traditions from the American South

Food Culture

- ✿ Cooking with love and a caring attitude is an important part of the African heritage food culture.
- ✿ Sharing meals at home and at cookouts, reunions and church gatherings provides comfort and builds community strength.
- ✿ Passing down old and new recipes from one generation to another strengthens family bonds and creates lasting memories.



Food Traditions

- ✿ African heritage foods and cooking methods spread from Central and West Africa to the Caribbean and North and South America hundreds of years ago.
- ✿ In the American South, foods that became African heritage staples were grown in vegetable gardens and fields and foraged from the wild. Farm animals and fish provided protein and flavoring.
- ✿ African heritage foods include beans, corn, greens, hot peppers, melon, okra, peanuts, rice, squash, sweet potatoes and tomatoes. Some of the foods came from Africa, such as okra, peanuts, some peppers and rice. Many grow well in Oregon.



Stories

In our *Oregon Harvest for Schools* video, Malcolm introduces the farm he manages where African heritage foods are grown and community members gather. Produce is harvested for a recipe prepared by grandmas and enjoyed at a community meal. Watch the video at: <https://www.foodhero.org/oregon-harvest-schools-african-heritage>



Food memories season our lives and connect us to our culture



"When I cook, I think of the connection I had with my family living in the South at a young age. We had cookouts and community connecting, joking, laughing and having a good time—it always felt like family reunion."
Ms. Mildred Braxton

Members of *Grandma's Hands*, Gresham, Oregon, sharing thoughts on family and food.

"I remember the smelling of food and meals coming together in the kitchen..."
Ms. Vanessa Chambers

"Cooking is nostalgic and reminds me of home, aromas, family, fun, conversations and culture—there's culture in the food and in all the colors!"
Ms. Marchane Lawson



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Enjoy Cooking Together

Succotash

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup **vegetable oil**
- ½ medium **onion**, chopped
- 2 cups whole kernel **corn** (fresh, frozen or canned and drained)
- 2 cups **lima beans** (fresh, frozen or canned and drained)
- 2 cups cut **okra** (fresh or frozen)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) stewed or diced **tomatoes**
- 1 cup **water**
- 1 teaspoon **salt**
- ½ teaspoon **pepper**

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a large saucepan on medium heat, sauté onion in the oil until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients and reduce heat to medium-low. Slowly cook and stir every once in a while for 30 to 45 minutes, until the veggies are tender, the liquids reduce and the flavors are blended.
4. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 5½ cups

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 30 to 45 minutes

Notes:

- 🌸 The vegetables and amounts of each are provided as a guide and do not have to be exact. Create your own combination according to your taste and what is available!
- 🌸 Try adding other seasonings such as garlic powder, thyme, basil or hot sauce.

Go to
[FoodHero.org](https://www.foodhero.org)
for easy,
tasty recipes

Cornbread

Ingredients:

- 1 cup **cornmeal**
- 1 cup **flour** (whole-wheat or all-purpose)
- ½ teaspoon **salt**
- 2 teaspoons **baking powder**
- 1 to 2 Tablespoons **sugar**
- 1 cup 1% or skim **milk**
- 2 **eggs**
- ¼ cup **vegetable oil** or melted margarine or butter

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Lightly grease an 8x8-inch square or 9-inch round baking dish.
3. In a large bowl, mix together cornmeal, flour, salt, baking powder and sugar.
4. In another bowl, mix together milk, eggs and oil.
5. Add liquids to dry ingredients and stir until combined, but do not overmix.
6. Pour batter into baking dish. Bake for about 20 to 25 minutes, until top is lightly browned and sides have pulled away from pan.
7. Serve warm. Store leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature.

Makes 12 pieces

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 to 25 minutes



Kids Can!

When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:

- 🌸 **crack eggs and wash their hands after handling raw eggs.**
- 🌸 **measure and mix ingredients.**
- 🌸 **pour batter into a baking dish.**