



Alison  
Saar

RECIPES  
FOR TROUBLE



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**RECIPES FOR TROUBLE**



**CONJURIN' IN THE KITCHEN**

**Is about feel more than measurement**

**The syncopation of ingredients is essential**

**Improvisation strongly encouraged**

RECIPES

5

**Good Money Greens**

9

**Hoppin' John**

12

**Black Skillet Cornbread**

15

**Aunt Jai's Gumbo**

21

**"Put your foot in it" Sweet Potato Pie**



# Good Money Greens



**Eating greens on New Year's Day  
will attract the cash for the year,  
now put your money where your mouth is.**

2 BUNCHES mustard or  
turnip greens  
¼ CUP vegetable stock  
3 CLOVES garlic, minced  
1 red onion, chopped

½ CUP salt pork,  
cut into small pieces\*  
Salt + pepper  
Hot sauce of choice  
Liquid smoke (optional)

*\*Hold the hog if you're so inclined, a dash of liquid smoke makes it fine*

## SONG PAIRING

Charles Mingus *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*  
Daddy Hotcakes *Mustard Greens*



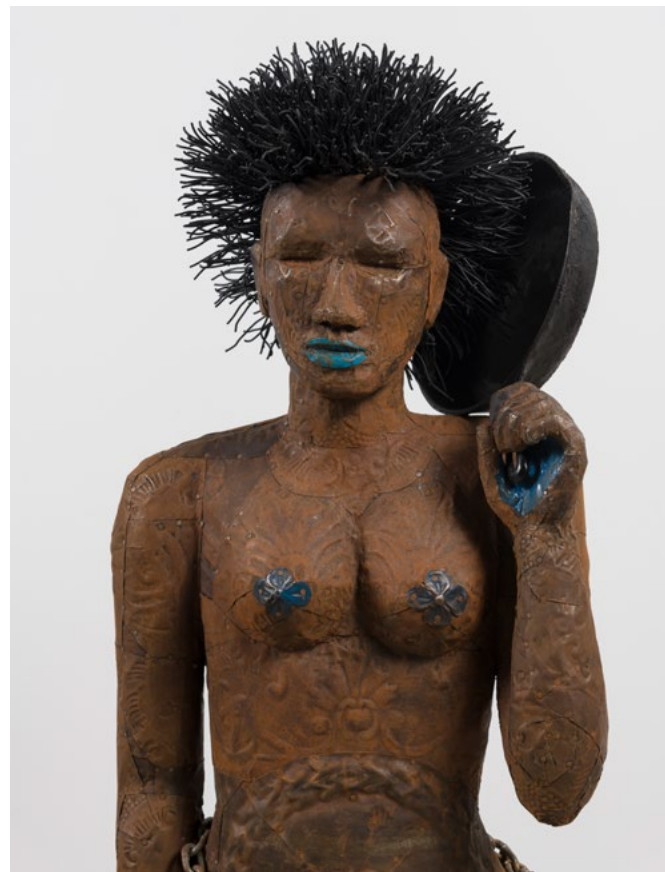
WASH the greens  
STEM and roll the leaves  
CHIFFONADE into ribbons

HEAT 2 swigs of oil in a pan  
ADD the salt pork, brown just a bit  
ADD the onion, cook until limp  
ADD the garlic, don't burn to a crisp

THROW IN the greens and sauté a spell  
THEN ADD the stock and simmer well  
*CHANTEZ LAS BAS* until they're tender  
SEASON with hot sauce, salt and pepper  
OR JUST *Slap Ya Mama* and call it a day!

.....

SOP UP the potlikker with some skillet corn bread  
OR SLURP from the pot





# Hoppin' John



**Folks would sometimes carry a black-eyed pea  
in their pocket to fend off the evil eye.  
So for plenty of luck put plenty on the plate.  
But beware, each pea left uneaten will bring tears.**

- |                                    |                         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 CUPS water                       | 1 TEASPOON ground cumin |
| 1 TABLESPOON vegetable bouillon    | 1 TEASPOON dried thyme  |
| 1 POUND dried black-eyed peas      | 1 TEASPOON chili powder |
| 1 CUP cubed salt pork*             | (or more)               |
| 1 LARGE green bell pepper, chopped | 2 CUPS uncooked rice    |
| 1 tomato, chopped                  | Salt + pepper           |
| 1 LARGE onion, chopped             | Liquid smoke (optional) |

*\*No pig? No problem! Salt like nobody's watching*

SONG PAIRING

Alice Coltrane *Wisdom Eye*



COMBINE water, bouillon and black-eyed peas in a large pot  
BRING to a bubbling roil, then simmer on a slow fire  
COOK beans gently until soft, be careful they don't go mush

HEAT UP a heavy skillet and crisp the salted pig  
ADD the green pepper, onion, cumin, thyme and garlic  
SWISH and cook to a nice shade of brown  
ADD tomatoes and chili, stir it around

COMBINE with the beans, add the rice too  
COVER with water by an inch or two

LET IT BOIL, then simmer light  
IN 30 MINUTES, all should be right

SALT AND PEPPER as you like  
LIQUID SMOKE IT, cause why not?



# Black Skillet Corn Bread



1 CUP yellow cornmeal  
1 CUP all-purpose  
flour  
2 ½ TEASPOONS  
baking powder  
2 TABLESPOONS sugar  
1 TEASPOON salt  
2 eggs  
1 CUP buttermilk  
¼ (½ STICK) butter

## SONG PAIRING

Louis Jordan  
& The Tympany Five  
*Beans and Cornbread*

Sun Ra  
*Hot Skillet Mama*

PREHEAT the oven to 425° f

GRAB a big bowl

MIX the cornmeal, flour, baking powder,  
sugar and salt

TAKE a little bowl

BEAT the eggs with buttermilk to  
a light-footed waltz

PUT the wet with the dry

STIR it up good

NOW ONTO THE SKILLET...

IN A 9-inch cast iron skillet, place the butter

HEAT in the oven 'til you hear it sputter

POUR butter in batter, and give it a whirl

THEN BACK to the skillet, thatta girl!

BAKE in the oven for a 20-minute count

OR when a wood pick inserted cleanly comes out

BRUSH with melted butter for a glistening glow

NO ONE can resist, not friend or foe

CUT into wedges, refined or rough

SERVE it up warm to someone you love







# Aunt Jai's Gumbo



**Okra, or *okrum* in Twi, or *quin gumbo* in Bantu, was brought from Africa to the Americas by slaves.**

**Some dislike its slimy texture and the more you slice them, the slipperier they get. I prefer to use small young pods that are more tender and can be cooked whole to minimize the slime factor. However, that slippery quality in okra is thought to help facilitate an easy childbirth.**

**They just slide on out.**

**Gumbo is an opportunity stew. If you start with an okra base you can improvise with whatever ingredients you have on hand. You can set some aside for vegans and vegetarians, before adding chicken, ham, andouille, shrimp, crab or crawdads.**

## SONG PAIRING

Clifton Chenier *Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler*  
Booker T. & the M.G.'s *Green Onions*

**ROUX**

2/3 CUP vegetable oil or shortening

2/3 CUP flour

**GUMBO**

1 POUND okra (smaller ones keep whole, slice larger pods)

1 CUP chopped onion

3/4 CUP chopped celery

2 CLOVES garlic minced

1/2 CUP chopped green pepper

1/2 CUP chopped green onions

1/4 CUP chopped fresh parsley

1 bay leaf

3/4 TEASPOON dried thyme leaves

1/2 TEASPOON dried marjoram

1/2 TEASPOON dried basil

1/2 TEASPOON cayenne pepper (or more)

2 CUPS chopped tomatoes

1 QUART vegetable stock

1 POUND andouille sausage, sliced

1/2 POUND ham

2 POUNDS chicken

(dark meat preferred)

Shrimp, crab or crawdads

(however many desired,

in any combination you like)

Salt + pepper

Hot sauce of choice (obligatory)

Steamed rice for serving

*\*Need more spice? Try one or more of these: Bayou Magic, Zatarain's Creole Seasoning or Gumbo Filé, Zydeco Chop Chop*

*\*Skip the meat/seafood for the veggie lover in you*



### ROUX

HEAT oil or shortening in a large pot  
 SLOWLY add flour, stir a lot  
 GO round and round  
 'TIL it's caramel brown  
 KEEP a watchful eye, don't let it burn  
 OR you'll have to take another turn

### GUMBO

TO THE ROUX, add okra, onion, celery, garlic and green pepper  
 COOK 'til okra is crisp, but tender  
 HERBS and spices go right on in  
 THEN tomatoes and broth, get it simmerin'  
 PILE IN the sausage, ham and chicken meat\*  
 COOK for an hour on low heat  
 ADD the seafood, in five minutes proclaim—  
 LAISSEZ les bon temps rouler!

SEIZE the moment to season  
 TO NOT would be committing treason

SPOON over rice  
 OR EAT straight from the pot





# "Put your foot in it" Sweet Potato Pie



**It's been said that eating yams can increase fertility for those wishing to conceive. This recipe is so "put your foot in it" good, you'll get busy making feet for shoes.**

## PIE FILLING

3 MEDIUM-SIZED yams  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 CUP brown sugar  
½ STICK butter, melted  
¼ TEASPOON cinnamon  
¼ TEASPOON nutmeg  
¼ TEASPOON grated fresh ginger  
1 TEASPOON grated orange zest  
1 TEASPOON vanilla  
1 ½ CUPS milk

## PIE CRUST

1 ½ CUPS flour  
½ TEASPOON baking powder  
½ TEASPOON salt  
¾ CUP cold water  
¾ CUP shortening or lard  
(go lard if you can)

## SONG PAIRING

Nina Simone *I Want A Little Sugar in My Bowl*



### PIE FILLING

PREHEAT the oven to 350°F

BAKE yams whole until softened  
 ABOUT 45 minutes, hurry you mustn't  
 REMOVE from the oven, let cool down completely  
 PEEL then mash, open and freely

FUEL your desires, however wild  
 AND bring on the spice, don't make it mild

EVERYTHING else gets added too  
 POUR into the crust\* with your best attitude

FOR an hour and a half, bake in the oven  
 THE DELIGHT that awaits is pure, sweet lovin'

EAT with your lover  
 GET under the covers

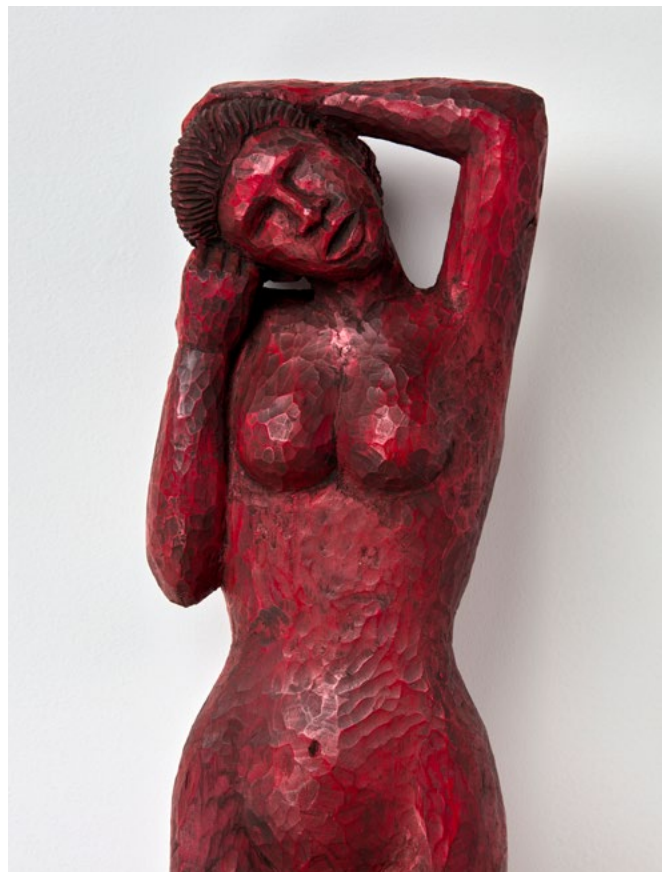
### \*PIE CRUST

COMBINE the dry ingredients with a sift  
 CUT the shortening in the mixture, let your mind drift

SLOWLY add water by the drop  
 ONCE the dough comes together, stop

SHAPE into a disk, wrap and chill in the fridge

AFTER an hour, flatten the dough  
 PRESS into the pan, let the good times roll!









## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

*Kitchen Amazon (painting)*, 2020  
oils, enamel, and spray tar on charred  
found wood tabletop and chain  
54 x 30 x 2 1/2 in. (137.2 x 76.2 x 6.4 cm)  
inside front cover

*Kitchen Amazon*, 2019  
wood, ceiling tin, barbed wire, tar,  
found skillets, linoleum, and found chain  
81 x 21 x 20 in. (205.7 x 53.3 x 50.8 cm)  
p. 4

*Sorrow's Kitchen*, 2020  
wood, tin, acrylics, spray tar,  
ceiling tin and linoleum  
28 x 12 x 10 in. (71.1 x 30.5 x 25.4 cm)  
p. 8

*Suckle Study*, 2019  
cast bronze  
14 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.  
(36.8 x 26.7 x 12.1 cm)  
p. 13

*Set to Simmer*, 2019  
wood, ceiling tin, enamel paint ceiling  
tin wire, found table, chair, and skillet  
65 x 72 x 36 in. (165.1 x 182.9 x 91.4 cm)  
p. 14

*The Big Singe*, 2020  
wood, metal, enamel paint, spray tar  
86 x 13 x 7 in. (218.4 x 33 x 17.8 cm)  
p. 20

*Congolene Resistance*, 2020  
enamel on found tin  
18 in. (45.7 cm) diameter  
p. 24

*Hot Comb Haint, Caldonia*, 2019  
wood, acrylic, spray tar and  
found hot comb  
12 x 2 x 2 in. (30.5 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm)  
inside back cover

More works at  
[lalouver.com/saarkitchen](http://lalouver.com/saarkitchen)



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