



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

African American Heritage

Food of the American Nile

Set sail on
Freedom Schooner Amistad

Spice up your life with
Moroccan tagine

The Muhammad Ali Center



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Thompson Hospitality
Compass Group



This timeless river may be the mother of African American culture, and from its banks have come several cuisines that are American classics.

Food from the ‘American Nile’

Once the major thoroughfare between the north and south of the country, the Mississippi River, like the Nile in Africa, was the primary route for moving goods and people – among them Africans brought to America to work cotton, cane, sorghum, and other plantation crops. All along the river, Africans made profound contributions to American industry, art, music, and the historical story of American freedom. Africans also brought a rich food heritage to America – fusing the cooking styles of their homeland with the available goods that flanked the river, and in the process created several African American cuisines that have become all-American classics.

The best-known regional cuisine is that of New Orleans, a gourmand’s delight of fusion foods from Spanish, French, and African cultures, no doubt brought to life by many an African plantation cook. Rice-based jambalaya and gumbo thickened with okra and prodigious use of hot pepper harken back to traditional West African dishes. Further up the river in Missouri, barbecue is king—brought from the Caribbean where it originated but perfected there, as here, in the hands of African descendants.

Throughout the lower Mississippi, pork byproducts are used as a flavoring in greens, soups, and more—a tradition that began when slaves were given offal or scrap meats as part of their rations. Items like catfish, once considered a “garbage” fish, today enjoy enormous popularity thanks to the skillful preparation of African American cooks who first used it as a readily available—and easily procured—source of protein. The sorghum grain once widely grown in Tennessee came directly from Africa.

It is this culinary ingenuity in the face of scarcity and hardship that makes African American cuisine a true art form. Foods of the Mississippi, the Caribbean, and cuisines from the African continent are now the hottest trends in food service, and definitely warrant exploration by home cooks and professionals.



The Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri



If you were president of your graduating class at Brown University, had earned dual degrees in law and public health, lived in Washington, D.C., and was one of *People* magazine’s most eligible bachelors, what would you be?

A politician, lobbyist, or high-priced lawyer?

None of the above if you’re Warren Brown. Warren discovered a secret in life that few others get a chance to realize. Forget what others expect of you. Find your passion, give it everything you have, and the rewards will be fantastic.

Cake Love is the growing business that Warren has nestled in a trendy area on U Street, a business he started on a shoestring budget after a short legal career in the inspector general’s office at Health and Human Services. While he found litigation both challenging and fun, the more mundane aspects of practicing law were killing his spirit. After all those years preparing for the courtroom, Warren found his true passion was contemplating the intricacies of boiling sugar and the necessity of hot sugary syrup in making butter cream icing.

Today the bakery is turning out a couple hundred cakes a week, employs a dozen fellow cake lovers, and will reach nearly \$1,000,000 in yearly sales. Each cake has a distinct personality and name, like My Downfall, Sassy, and Sarah’s Secret. For a peek at Warren’s menu, or better yet to order a cake, visit the Thompson Hospitality Web site at www.thompsonhospitality.com.



In the News ...

- Michele Hoskins overcame the darkest period in her life with entrepreneurial spirit and a secret family recipe handed down by her great-great-grandmother. That recipe - honey cream syrup made from scratch - was traditionally given to the third daughter of the next generation and no one else. Today, the syrup is the basis for Michele’s multimillion-dollar business and her new book, *Sweet Expectations*. (**Black Enterprise**, December 2004).

Celebrating the holidays ...

African American Style

Living through the hardships of slavery and the tension of the post-emancipation years, many African Americans found a healing, spiritual core through a melding of stoic Christian principles and the jubilant, celebratory practice of tribal religion. The promise of resurrection into a better life was—and remains—the bastion of their religious belief, and that hope is often symbolized in the way African Americans celebrate holidays.

New Year's Day – a day of renewal and celebrated around the world with a great variety of festivities – is a very popular tradition among African Americans. It is known distinctly for the foods that are eaten. With New Year's wishes for a better future comes a feast deeply influenced by the history and heritage of West Africa and the southern United States. One traditional dish, Hoppin' John, is made with black-eyed peas, which are thought to be lucky in Africa. It is almost always eaten on New Year's Day, and can be accompanied by collard greens to symbolize prosperity.



The Kwanzaa table is set with symbolic items like fruits and vegetables.

corn (Vibunzi). The feast (Karamu) is held on December 31 and features foods representing the melding of African ingredients into the cuisines of the Americas, including sweet potato pie, corn bread, collard and other greens, coconut cakes and breads, and more.

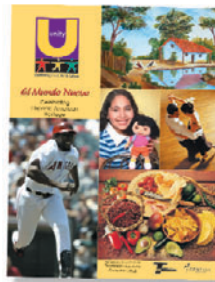
For African American recipes that are enjoyed year round, check out *Kwanzaa, An African-American Celebration of Culture and Cooking* by Eric V. Copage (\$15, William Morrow).

Stars of 2004

The 2004 Hispanic edition of *Unity* featured Vladimir Guerrero, who finished the season strong and won the American League MVP award. The contest wasn't close – Guerrero won 21 of 28 first place votes.

In February 2005, the very first Grammy will be awarded for Best Hawaiian Music Album. The final ballot includes "Some Call It Aloha, Don't Tell" by Brothers Cazimero, featured in our Native edition.

In case you missed them, you can read these stories and others in past editions of *Unity* by visiting the Thompson Hospitality Web site.



Things to do ...

Spoletto Festival USA

May 27–June 12
Charleston, SC



Spoletto is an annual festival lasting 17 days and nights with more than 100 performances by both renowned and emerging artists. It is a great opportunity to see historic Charleston, which is rich in African American History, and the low-country.

Beale Street Festival

April 30–May 1
Memphis, TN



To the world, Memphis means great music, and the Beale Street Music Festival celebrates this vital heritage with plenty of blues, rock, gospel, R&B, alternative, and soul music to tingle your spine and shake your soul.



Photo by John Beckman

"The Greatest" grand opening

The Muhammad Ali Center will open in Louisville, Kentucky in the fall of 2005. The center is destined to be an international cultural treasure and the grand opening events will attract visitors worldwide.

The center will not only preserve Ali's profound legacy for many generations to come, it will challenge visitors to be as great as they can be using the experiences of a true-life hero who has inspired all. The center will include exhibits, classrooms, a theatre, interactive multimedia, six exploratory galleries, a library, a retail shop, and a café.

Did You Know ...

- Mehndi is the art of temporarily adorning the hands and feet with a paste made from the finely ground leaves of the henna plant. Evidence suggests mehndi originated in North Africa, with one of the earliest documentations being the staining of fingers and toes of Egyptian Pharaohs prior to mummification. Much of mehndi tradition and symbolism has been lost over the centuries, but the art is enjoying a resurgence in pop culture. Madonna, Demi Moore, Drew Barrymore, Laurence Fishburne, and Angela Bassett are just a few celebs who have sported mehndi art.

Ties That Bind

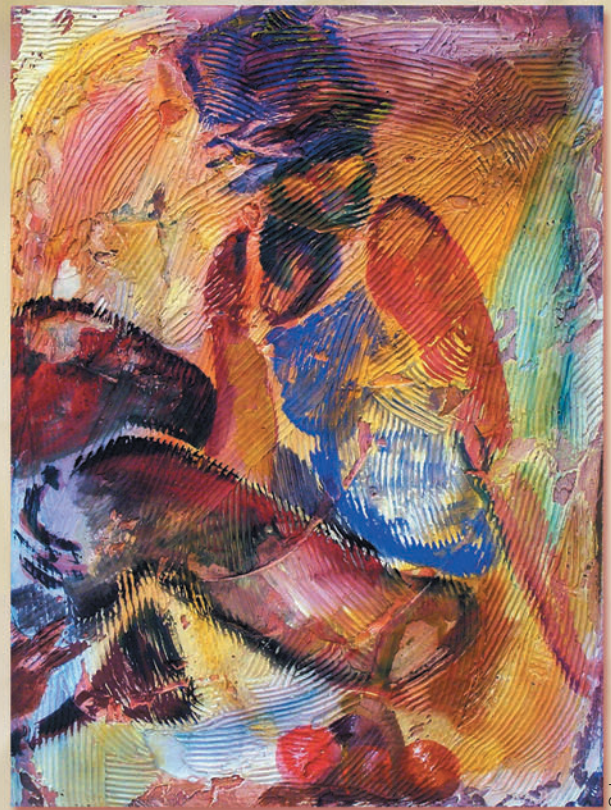
A Tapestry of Cultural Connections

Promoting Cultural Awareness and Diversity Through the Arts

Diversity, as it is represented through fine art, provides a unique, personal, and visual expression of our valuable cultural differences. Our art collection attempts to mirror the diverse cultures of employees, students, clients, shareholders, and local communities. *Unity* and the artwork it showcases can supplement your existing diversity communication program or be used as a stand-alone diversity publication. It is the perfect way to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and discover the vibrancy of new cultures and lifestyles.

On *Unity's* cover, bottom, right: Michael Parchment, "Practice Session." For more information on our cultural fine art collection, please visit

www.picture-that.com



Coleman

"It's O.K."



Morris

"Dance Triumph"



Coleman

"Hallelujah"



Calvin Coleman

"My work is motivated by movement and color, which is uniquely designed to inspire, encourage and ignite the senses."

Born in Hampton, Virginia, Calvin spent his youth in the quiet suburb of Swarthmore just outside of Philadelphia. He attended Lincoln University, where he received his degree in early childhood education. Calvin infuses movement and color in many of his works, setting out to capture feelings and emotions in his paintings. The messages from Calvin's works are global, as he strongly believes that his spiritual beliefs transcend cultural, ethnic, and national barriers.



Morris

"Street Musician"



COLEMAN

"Live to Pray, Pray to Live"



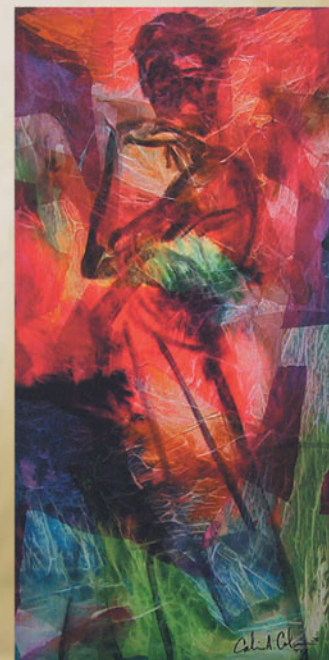
Coleman

"Through the Storm"



Morris

"Father and Sons on Inkwell Beach"



COLEMAN

"This Too Shall Pass"



Myrna Morris

"I try to capture movement and vitality in a simplistic form. I have always been fascinated in how the body communicates messages and often use dancers as my theme."

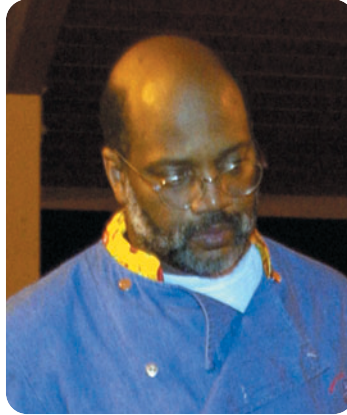
Myrna holds a B.A. from Saint Peter's College and an M.A. from William Paterson University, and she has studied at the Art Students League, the Barnes Foundation, and the Arts Center of Northern New Jersey. Her work has been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Bergen Museum of Art and Science.

Flavors of the Mississippi, Chef Dwight Jones

Chef, fisherman, author

A native of Missouri, Dwight has had a long love affair with the river that runs through his home state. Professionally trained at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, he has been an avid cook and explorer of the foods of the Mississippi since he was a teenager harvesting fresh produce from his family's fields.

Dwight is a serious sport fisherman and works as a garde manger/line chef at the Monarch restaurant in St. Louis, where he uses his intimate knowledge of local ingredients to create authentic and elegant dishes. He is a connoisseur and collector of Missouri wines, and he was selected to join the American Pavilion Culinary Team at the Cannes International Film Festival in Cannes, France in May 2004.



Stuffed Catfish Filets

Popular all along the river, catfish is a particular staple in the lower Mississippi states, and there are more ways to cook catfish than there are levies and currents along the great waterway. Here we use crabmeat stuffing to create a sweeter dimension and saffron beurre blanc sauce adds a more urbane touch to this simple American fish.



8 catfish filets, 6-8 ounces each
1/2 cup minced onion
1/4 cup minced celery
1/2 clove garlic
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon paprika
1 pound backfin crabmeat
1 egg, beaten

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add about 2 tablespoons of canola oil. Add the

onions and celery. Sauté until translucent. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 additional minute. Remove from the heat and allow the mixture to cool. Combine the sautéed vegetables with the crabmeat. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Fold the beaten egg into the mixture.

Place the filets on a clean work surface and cut each in half crosswise. Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add about 4 tablespoons of canola oil and heat. Place the filet halves in the pan skin-side up. Sear until golden brown. Turn each filet and sear the opposite side for about 1 minute. Remove to plate.

Grease two 9-by-13-inch pans. Place four filet halves in each pan skin-side up. Top each filet with a small mound of the crab stuffing, about 2 ounces. Top the crab stuffing with another filet half, skin-side down. Place the pan in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes. The fish filet packets should be flaky when they are done and the crab stuffing is thoroughly heated.

This dish is excellent when served with saffron beurre blanc, another of Dwight's favorite recipes, which you can find on the Thompson Hospitality Web site.

Bold, exotic, romantic ... Moroccan tagine adds spice to life

Casablanca. Marrakesh. Tangier. Cities that spark adventurous spirits and romantic flutters. They are located in Morocco, the north African country that sits at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea, and their history predates the Romans.

Moroccan cuisine is a hot trend at upscale restaurants across the country, so chances are an authentic meal is somewhere close to you. If you take the plunge into Moroccan food, you'll find yourself mesmerized by the complexity, sophistication, and pleasure of this exotic cuisine. While couscous and mint tea are good starts, it is tagine that will test your gastronomical spirit.



Tagine is the signature dish of Morocco, with a key ingredient being Ras al-hanut - a complex blend of 20 to 80 spices.

Made and served in a cooking vessel by the same name, tagine can include any number of ingredients that would stand on their own as a unique flavor, but mixed together, they elevate the taste sensations to a new level. Lamb or chicken tagines are the most common; they can be cooked with onions, garlic, raisins, apricots, or olives. But the dish is always set off with a fiery spice blend called Ras al-hanut. Spice shops hire experts to make the stuff – a combination of up to 80 different spices – taking into consideration the age and origin of the individual spices.

If your taste buds crave bold and exotic flavors, they won't be disappointed with Moroccan tagine.

Recipes on the Web

Visit the Thompson Hospitality web site for authentic cultural dishes from around the world, including ...

Hoppin' John

Although recipes combining black-eyed peas and grains can be traced to ancient African cultures, many food historians agree that "Hoppin' John" is a distinctly American dish. New Year's is the one day you should eat Hoppin' John, as African tradition has it that black-eyed peas are lucky; however, Hoppin' John is a dish that can be enjoyed at any time of year.



In the galley with **Chef James Henry Patterson Jr.**

**Executive Chef and Morale Officer
Freedom Schooner *Amistad***

James is an original crew member of Freedom Schooner *Amistad*. He's been feeding hungry crews since the ship's first launch in 2000. James not only handles the grub but is the designer of

the ship's galley. In addition to his role as executive chef, he is the ship's morale officer and makes regular appearances on behalf of *Amistad*, sharing the story of the Amistad Incident and promoting the mission of the organization.

James has more than 40 years experience as chef and head chef, beginning his career as many chefs do – washing pots. He took a small break from the kitchen in 1965 to serve his country in the Marine Corps and Vietnam. His first executive-chef position was with Voyager Cruises, a position he held for more than ten years. He went on to work on a variety of vessels and in restaurants throughout the Caribbean. His recipes have been featured in *Gourmet*, *Connecticut* magazine, and more than a few newspapers. Mandarin orange cole slaw and London Broil have proven to be favorites among the *Amistad* crew and guests. We hope that you will enjoy them, too.

Mandarin Orange Cole Slaw

- 1 head green cabbage, chopped fine
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 3 tbsp. white vinegar
- 2 tbsp. oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 2 small cans mandarin oranges

Mix all ingredients in one bowl. Blend well. Refrigerate for 10 minutes.

Pour off excess liquid and serve.

London Broil

- 2 flank steaks or London broil
- 1 cup vegetable oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 4-5 cloves of garlic, smashed
- 1-2 bay leaves
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 4 tbsp. garlic powder

Place beef in a shallow pan. Whisk the remaining ingredients together and pour over beef. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand for two hours at room temperature, turning frequently. Prepare grill while beef is marinating. When ready, cook on grill for 5 minutes each side for medium rare. Slice thinly and serve.



London broil is always a hit among a tired and hungry Amistad crew.

“I’ll have the scallops, with collards and peas, please.”

“On the menu, below the stuffed portobello-mushroom appetizer and pan-seared scallops, are deep-fried catfish, collard and mustard greens, and macaroni and cheese. Don't forget the cobbler or sweet potato pie. Soul food has gone gourmet.” – writes Carrie Spencer for the Associated Press about Brownstone on Main, one of Columbus, Ohio's most popular new restaurants.

You can now find gourmet soul food in most every major city, although some connoisseurs will argue that mass production of this once-Southern cuisine will never taste as good as the real deal (read as *made in ma ma's kitchen*). While that can make for a heated debate, it can't be denied that soul food is cooking up profits for restaurateurs and becoming a big business within the industry.

Did You Know ...

Soul food's roots grow directly into the countryside of West Africa. Here are some common African foods that became American staples:

Rice

The American rice industry was floundering until African slaves brought practical knowledge of this crop to the Carolinas. Their knowledge helped turn the crop around, as rice was cultivated largely throughout Africa.

Okra

The name “gumbo” comes from the African words for okra, which grows from the African hibiscus. Gombo, kingombo, ngumbo, and ochingombo are just a few of the variations. Gumbo, or okra, is the main ingredient of the famous Cajun stew of the same name.

Black-eyed peas

Considered particularly lucky in Africa, black eyed peas are eaten year-round, but they are a must-have in a New Year's dish called “Hoppin' John.” Recipes combining black-eyed peas and grains can be traced to ancient African cultures, but food historians agree that Hoppin' John is distinctly American.

Sweet potato

Sweet potatoes are substitutes for the true yams found in Africa, where they are a major form of dietary starch. In America they find their way into pies, casseroles, or are simply baked.

Jerk chicken could well be the official dish of Jamaica. Flavored with allspice, cinammon, cloves, nutmeg, and scotch bonnet peppers, jerk is a spicy dish that has become an international hit. While the jerk marinade is great on pork, beef, and even fish, you'll find chicken is the most popular ingredient.

Gumbo comes from the cultural crossroads of the Mississippi delta and is rich in African American, French, English, and Spanish influence. Gumbo gets its name from African words for okra, the dish's signature ingredient. The second most important ingredient in gumbo is filé powder, a contribution of the Choctaw Indians of Mississippi and Alabama. Filé is the dried leaves of the sassafras tree, made into a powder, and used for flavor and thickening.



Freedom Schooner *Amistad* to make its first international voyage

The original Amistad is no longer with us. After the famous Amistad Incident of 1839, the ship was sold to Captain George Howland of Rhode Island as a cargo schooner and then lost in Guadeloupe, never to be heard of again. But the contemporary recreation of the original *La Amistad* is sailing the high seas, and its cargo is a high-tech and kid-friendly adventure into history and cultural awareness.



(c)2003 by Voytec Wacowski

Although not an exact replica of the 1839 vessel, Freedom Schooner *Amistad* was designed and built with the traditional construction techniques used during the 19th century, but the ship is a little safer and more reliable due to an added engine, communications equipment, and a state-of-the-art GPS navigation system.

In May 2005, the tall ship will make its maiden international voyage to Bermuda and participate in that country's Heritage Month celebrations. While there, the ship will become a floating historical exhibit, and the captain and crew of 14 will teach a unique "Lessons for Life" curriculum that focuses on character development, diversity awareness, and leadership. The program has been a huge success in the states among children, adults, and teachers, and it is often used as a tool for corporations to expand the horizons of employees and build diversity-based teams.

You can visit the Thompson Web site to find out more about sailing aboard Freedom Schooner *Amistad*, becoming a corporate sponsor, or even getting a job as a crew member. You can also find out what the menu looks like in the ship's galley by cooking up authentic sailing recipes, provided by the ship's executive chef, on our food page!

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The next time you board a plane, you might want to show a little respect to the kids with the big grins greeting you at the door ...

they aren't passengers, they're the pilots!

Of course, it will be a few more years until Jimmy Haywood and Kenny Roy are hired for commercial air travel, but at 11 and 14 years old, they have already made their mark in aviation history.



Their achievements started easily enough, with a dream. But for Jimmy and Kenny, dreaming wasn't enough. In exchange for flying lessons they volunteered to work at the Compton, California-based Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum. The lessons paid off and in September 2004, they each garnered a world record because of their hard-earned flying skills.

Jimmy became the youngest African American pilot (age 11) to make an international flight when he flew 20 hours in a Cessna 172 to complete a round trip flight to Canada. During their half-time stop in Vancouver, Kenny took his opportunity to become the youngest African American pilot (age 14) licensed to fly solo, executing stalls, spins, and spiral dives like a seasoned pro.

While the boys are being heralded for breaking new ground for all kids, the fact is African Americans have been making contributions to flying since the invention of the airplane. The Tuskegee Airmen are legendary examples of this, as well as Willie Beatrice Brown and Eugene J. Bullard.

As for Jimmy and Kenny, who can say the sky's the limit? For now they're enjoying the moment and learning how to be celebrities. They were grand marshals in the local Christmas parade and will be honored guests at the official opening of African American History Month in Los Angeles.

Send Us Your Stories

Diversity is a core value of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. In order to serve you better, visit us at www.thompsonhospitality.com to give us your comments and suggestions for future stories.

Visit www.thompsonhospitality.com for information on our many diversity initiatives.

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