

Monday is Red Beans and Rice Day

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During my time living and studying in New Orleans, I always wondered why my friends would anticipate their mother's or grandmother's meals at the beginning of the work week. That's because Monday is Red Beans and Rice Day in the Crescent City.

Whether served up at home or as the Monday special at many of the New Orleans restaurants, there's nothing like a pot of slow cooked creamy red beans. Just serve them over rice and top with a few dashes of Louisiana hot sauce. It's pure Cajun and Creole heaven!

They're so good Louis Armstrong not only ate them, but he signed his name,

"Red Beans and Ricely

Yours,

Louis Armstrong!"



New Orleans Red Beans and Rice

So why do we eat the Louisiana Creole dish on Mondays?

Traditionally on Sunday a ham was served for supper after church. You probably remember having a big meal every Sunday at Grandma's, right? Since the following day Monday was laundry day and during those times people didn't have washing machines a low-fuss meal needed to be prepared.

You see, the ladies of the house (generally house maids) had to scrub the family's clothes by hand, often having to boil the garments and then use a crank and wringer to dry them as much as possible in preparation for hanging them on the clothes line.

As you can imagine, there wasn't much time to cook a meal, let alone a fancy one. Therefore, the women would soak the red beans overnight, put a pot of beans on the stove; including the "[The Holy Trinity](#)", a few other simple ingredients, as well as Sunday dinner's ham bone. Voila! The laundry was cleaned and a filling and low-cost delicious meal was ready for supper on Monday evening.

Who Brought Red Beans to New Orleans?

Red beans were most likely first introduced in New Orleans when sugar plantation owners fled Saint-Dominge (Haiti) for Louisiana after the Haitian slaves revolted in the 1790s. The old Haitian recipe *Riz et Pois Rouges* mirrors the red beans and rice recipes that slaves either cooked for themselves or their slave master's families. The dish is called *Arroz con habichuela* in Spanish-speaking countries, such as Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Dominican Republic, and is also a popular staple meal. You'll even find varieties in Jamaica and India too.

While traditional New Orleans cuisine is thought to be spicy (namely Cajun and less often Creole dishes) red beans and rice are rather mild, so you'll always find a large bottle of Louisiana hot sauce on the table if you want to add some kick.

It's almost Monday wherever you are in the world, so how about cooking a pot of Red Beans and Rice ?