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EATING AROUND LOS ANGELES' RESTAURANT HISTORY

AS A KID MY MAIN LOVES WERE, AND STILL ARE, ART AND COOKING. NOTHING MAKES ME MORE HAPPY THEN COOKING FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THAT AND A NICE MARTINI. I'VE ALWAYS LOVED LOOKING FOR THE HIDDEN PLACES AROUND LOS ANGELES FOR FOOD THAT LEGENDS ARE MADE OF AND TASTY COCKTAILS. MOSTLY RESTAURANTS THAT ARE NO LONGER HERE BUT LIVE ON IN HISTORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS. THIS BLOG IS ABOUT THOSE PLACES AND THE SIGNATURE DISHES THAT MADE THEM THAT WAY. OH, AND THE RECIPES THAT MADE THEM.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011

Chasen's Chili



9039 Beverly Boulevard

What recipe is more legendary than Dave Chasen's world famous chili? For years many Chasen Chili recipes floated around but I'm almost positive this one is the real deal. Think ingredients that were readily available decades ago for the restaurant business. Both Farmer Brothers and Gebhardt comes to mind. With this said I traveled the web and this recipe tends to be the staple for a successful Chasen's Chili recipe. I've tried it several times and it truly is amazing.

Now for a little history...

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KIM REYNOLDS

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From its opening in 1936 until its closing in 1995 Chasen's was a Hollywood institution. The list of celebrities that ate at Chasen's, on a regular basis, was a who's who in Hollywood. From James Cagney, Clark Gable and Jimmy Stewart to the likes of George Burns, Ronald Reagan, Fred MacMurray and Joan Crawford... they all ate there. Alfred Hitchcock and his wife would have their Thursday night dinners at the restaurant.

One of Chasen's many signature dishes was their chili. As legend has it Dave Chasen would come into the restaurant on Sunday mornings and make enough chili for the week. He thought that the Chili was best when it had been frozen (I haven't tried that yet). The chili was so good, that in 1962, Elizabeth Taylor had it shipped to Rome, for an estimated \$100, while she was filming Cleopatra. Go Liz!



Elizabeth Taylor and singer Eddie Fisher dine at Chasen's in 1959

1/2 pound dried pinto beans
water
1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes in juice
1 large green bell pepper, chopped
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

3 cups onions, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 cup parsley, chopped
1/2 cup butter
2 pounds beef chuck, coarsely chopped*
1 pound pork shoulder, coarsely chopped*
1/3 cup Gebhardt's chili powder
1 Tbsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. pepper
1 1/2 tsp. Farmer Brothers ground cumin

1. Rinse the beans, picking out debris. Place beans in a Dutch oven with water to cover. Boil for two minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand one hour. Drain off liquid.

2. Rinse beans again. Add enough fresh water to cover beans. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for one hour or until tender.

3. Stir in tomatoes and their juice. Simmer five minutes. In a large skillet sauté bell pepper in oil for five minutes. Add onion and cook until tender, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic and parsley. Add mixture to bean mixture. Using the same skillet, melt the butter and sauté beef and pork chuck until browned. Drain. Add to bean mixture along with the chili powder, salt, pepper and cumin.

4. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for one hour. Uncover and cook 30 minutes more or to desired consistency. Chili shouldn't be too thick - it should be somewhat liquid but not runny like soup. Skim off excess fat and serve.

Makes 10 cups, or six main dish servings.

*Chasen's used a the best beef chuck, center cut, trimmed completely of fat. Chop meat into one-quarter to one-half inch chunks. It's much better than ground beef for this chili.



Chasen's Chili LIVES!

POSTED BY KIM REYNOLDS AT 11:16 AM 1 COMMENT:

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011

Little Joe's Restaurant

Little Joe's Italian Restaurant was a historic Italian restaurant which once stood in the Chinatown district of Los Angeles at the corner of Broadway and College Street. The area was once part of the city's Italian American enclave which preceded Chinatown. Little Joe's began in 1908 as a Italian-American Grocery company owned by John Nuccio, an Italian immigrant.

Nuccio retired in 1922 and sold the business to his best friend, John Gadeschi. Gadeschi's daughter Marion married John Albert Nuccio who went to work at the restaurant after serving in World War II. The business remained under control of the Nuccio family until it's closure.

The third generation owners, Steve, Bob and Jay Nuccio, having waited for a revitalization of Chinatown and downtown as a nighttime dining destination, decided that it was time to retire. Little Joe's closed it's doors in 1998.





Of the many meals served at Little Joe's, the meatballs and sauce are still legendary. I have found what looks to be the recipe that was used to make this dish. The only corner I cut was the use of veal. I'm sure it would change the flavor slightly and possibly make the dish a bit better. Enjoy!

Little Joe's Meatballs

- 1 pound ground beef chuck
- 1/2 pound ground pork
- 1/2 pound ground veal (or use another 1/2 pound pork)
- 1 cup bread crumbs, plain
- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup Italian parsley, chopped fine
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup onion, chopped fine
- 1 pinch dried oregano crumbled
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

Combine all ingredients and mix well. I use a ice cream scoop (spring action) to make meatballs of the same size. Roll meatballs by hand to finish them.

Lightly coat olive oil onto a foil lined baking sheet and place in meatballs.

Drizzle a little olive oil on meatballs and bake at 350° for 1/2 hour or until lightly browned. Do not let bottom of meatballs burn. Do not over cook. Remove meatballs and let cool (if you try to lift them while hot they may fall apart). Place into sauce and simmer.

Makes about 16 meatballs.

Little Joe's Sauce

3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, minced
2 Tbsp. minced green pepper
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 (1-pound 28-ounce) can whole tomatoes, chopped with juice
1 (1-pound 28-ounce) cans tomato puree
1 Tbsp. dried basil, crumbled
1 tsp. dried oregano, crumbled
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup dry red wine
1 cup water
2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
2 Tbsp. grated fresh parmesan cheese

Heat olive oil in large heavy pot. Add onion, green pepper, celery and garlic and saute until vegetables are tender.

Add tomatoes, tomato puree, basil, oregano and bay leaf. Simmer 1 hour, stirring frequently. Add red wine, water, salt and pepper.

Simmer 1 hour longer. If sauce is too thick, add more water. When sauce is cooked, add Parmesan cheese and mix well.

Makes about 12 servings.

POSTED BY KIM REYNOLDS AT 1:22 PM NO COMMENTS:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2011

The SmokeHouse's Garlic Cheese Bread



Established in 1946, The SmokeHouse was built at the end of WWII and is one of the few L.A. restaurants, of that era, to survive to today. It has the decor and aura of a different age and has grown steadily with the growth of the movie industry and through word of mouth in the Burbank community. I work in the Warner Bros. Triangle Building at Pass and Olive Avenue near the original location of The SmokeHouse. I've eaten there with coworkers many times and have seen a few famous people. George Clooney loved The SmokeHouse so much he named his production company, on the WB lot, after it. I

can't think of a signature dish that stands out, because everything is so tasty, except the Garlic Cheese Bread. It is truly legendary when it comes to yummy. I've tried this recipe at home and it tastes just like the restaurants. Enjoy.

The SmokeHouse Garlic Cheese Bread

1 loaf of sourdough bread, sliced in half
1 stick butter (use only butter)
2 teaspoons freshly chopped garlic (not that jarred stuff)
1 pkg. (1/3 cup) Kraft Macaroni and Cheese Powder Packet
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese (Kraft)

Melt butter, sauté garlic and let set overnight at room temperature.

Melt it down again, brush evenly over loaves.

Take Kraft Macaroni and Cheese powder and add in Parmesan.

Coat the bread w/ a thin layer to cover.

Bake in oven at 350 degrees for 5 minutes, then Broil bread for 30 seconds, rotating evenly. Slice and serve.





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