

MADAME BARBARA TREVIGNE BELLE CALAS

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INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups of mushy cold rice
- 6 teaspoons of flour
- 3 heaping tablespoons of sugar
- 2 teaspoons of baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon of salt
- ¼ teaspoon of vanilla
- ½ teaspoon of fresh nutmeg
- Powdered sugar
- 3 eggs
- Peanut oil or vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS:

Mix the cold mushy rice and dry ingredients together thoroughly. Add the eggs and when thoroughly mixed, drop by spoonful into hot deep oil in 360 degree temperature. Fry until golden brown and drain on brown paper bag. Sprinkle liberally with powdered sugar. Serve hot. Calas should never be eaten cold.



Overcook the rice the day before and keep in refrigerator. Maintain mixture below 70 degrees because the batter will separate when dropped in the hot oil. If you are planning on cooking lots of Calas, be sure to keep the ingredients in the refrigerator. If not, the consistency of the mixture will become watery and separate. It has to remain cold.

CALAS SONG:

*Tout chaud calas, Tout chaud calas
Belle calas, Belle calas
Tout Chaud Calas, donnez moi un picayune,
Belle Calas, Monsieur et Madame. Pour vous.*

Merchants in New Orleans frequently called and sang out their items for sale to attract customers. One popular vendor was the calas lady. The calas lady could be found selling her delicious calas near the St. Louis Cathedral Catholic Church, or walking along the levee by the Mississippi River. Each merchant sang a catchy tune about their item to attract the housewife. When the call of the vendor was heard, women do-popped (peeping through their shutters) and came out to inspect and purchase the goods. Not only were there food merchants, there was the rag man, the fruit man, and the cowan man who traveled first by mule-drawn carts, which graduated to trucks. It was the cadence of their songs and the freshness of their food that made a good dinner. Calas was breakfast Mardi Gras morning and after First Communion (Little Communion), with hot chocolate.

The memory of my maternal grandmother Emily Broyard Trevigne making calas, and the smell of her calas, fill my heart with joy. The simplicity of food makes a family gathering a treasure trove of love.