

12/25/08 - Soulful Christmas Dinner Menu Ideas

Soulful Christmas Dinner Menu Ideas

Nothing says good eating like a down home Christmas dinner. Folks gather to eat just like it was Sunday dinner only more of it. If you want to add a kick to your Christmas dinner consider adding some soulful dishes to your menu.

Any southern family can tell you that dinner isn't dinner without a little grease. For many southerners, especially in the African-American tradition, the main reason for dining together is fellowship. Families shared laughs and made important announcements and decisions over the dinner table. It is a sacred tradition in many families.

Soulful cooking came out of a need to share love with others. If you didn't have two dimes to give to another, you could give them the gift of a home cooked meal. A satisfied belly was a happy belly. Eating our favorite comfort foods releases those "feel good" endorphins in the brain and satisfies our entire being.

Soulful cooking is just like that and at Christmastime everyone in the family who is used to soulful cooking will expect to get some for dinner. So, add a bit of soul to your pot this Christmas season when you cook.

Try a new twist on the traditional turkey dinner. Barbeque or fry the turkey for Christmas dinner. Fryers don't cost much but it does take a fair amount of peanut oil to fill up the fryer. Be sure the turkey is good and dry on the outside before plunking him down into the hot oil.

A whole turkey is split in half and seasoned before placing it on the barbeque grill.

The time for grilling will depend on the size of the turkey. A smaller turkey can be grilled while a larger one can be fried or roasted. If you plan on roasting a turkey inject with a marinade to add extra flavor to the meat. There are commercial marinades on the market or you can create your own with a variety of spices like cayenne, cumin, turmeric, diced onion, garlic, and oil.

Any greens cooked for Christmas dinner are seasoned with some sort of smoked meat. It can be bacon, ham hocks, or smoked turkey. The meat is simmered in the water first to release the flavor and then the fresh collard greens, cabbage, or green beans are added. It takes about an hour to cook fresh greens and they will reduce as time goes on.

Sweet potatoes aren't the same if they aren't in a casserole. Choose to top with marshmallows or not, as long as there are candied pecans somewhere in the recipe. This is a side dish but it tastes more like a dessert.

A soulful Christmas dinner brings back memories of childhood meals. Everyone can sit around the dinner table and reminisce about past meals shared together. Introduce your friends to a bit of soul this Christmas with some soulful additions to the Christmas dinner table.