

ing is making its mark in the US – shrimp and grits and collard greens are finding their way onto the menus of the hottest restaurants – there is a focus on the freshest ingredients and food made from “scratch.” This is food to get excited about. This is food that tastes even better when made at home with family and friends. This is also food that is worth the time and effort it takes for the satisfaction it brings.

Here are a few tried and true Southern family recipes for all to enjoy!

### GRANNY’S SPECIAL ICED TEA

2 quarts of tap water in a clear jar placed on a window sill  
6 tea bags  
1 bunch of mint  
1 cup superfine sugar  
1 lemon, cut in half and seeded

Add cup of sugar to cold water and stir until all sugar is dissolved. Place the tea, mint and lemon and squeeze into the sugar water. Allow it to steep for three hours. Remove tea bags, mint and lemon. Transfer tea to a festive punch bowl fill with crushed ice and garnish with mint sprigs and lemon slices. Serve ice cold.



### BOILED PEANUTS

Snacks were essential in a Southern household, both to provide a healthy bite to keep hunger at bay until a meal was ready and also to provide a welcome, unexpected guest with a taste of sustenance and hospitality.

3 lbs green unshelled peanuts (find these in the produce section of your grocery store)  
6 qts. water (enough to cover)  
1 cup salt

Place washed peanuts in a kettle and cover with water. Add salt. Bring water to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook three hours until peanuts are tender but not mushy. Drain peanuts, serve at room temp, warm or cold – Boiled peanuts freeze well.

### BEST-EVER SQUASH CASSEROLE

2 lbs. fresh yellow squash  
1/4 cup bell pepper  
1/2 cup diced onion  
1/2 cup minced celery  
2 beaten eggs  
1/4 cup sweet milk  
1 tbs. sugar  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
Tabasco sauce to taste  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1/4 cup melted butter

Bread crumbs  
Fresh grated parmesan cheese

Wash and cut squash into chunks and place in large pot with water. Bring water to a boil and simmer squash until tender. Drain well in colander, forcing out excess liquid. Mash squash with a spoon. Transfer to a bowl and add pepper, onion, celery. Combine eggs, milk, sugar, Worcestershire, Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste. Fold into squash mixture. Spoon into glass baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs, drizzle melted butter and top generously with grated parmesan cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until top is bubbling. Even veggie grumblers will love this.

### EASY BOILED SHRIMP

2 lbs. fresh shell-on shrimp  
4 ozs. Old Bay seasoning  
2 12-oz. cans of good beer  
1 lemon (halved)  
1 red onion

Fill a large stock pot half-way with water. Add the Old Bay, beers, lemon and onion. Bring to a rolling boil. Add shrimp all at once and allow water to boil again. Remove from heat in three minutes or when shrimp are opaque and floating. Drain immediately, peel and eat. If you make these ahead of time, add a pound or two extra for sampling – they have been known to disappear before it is time to eat



### PRALINES

These are hard to resist and easy to make. (pictured above)

2 cups firmly packed brown sugar  
2 cups granulated sugar  
1/4 cup butter  
1 cup evaporated milk  
1 cup milk  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract  
3 tsp. light corn syrup  
2 cups coarsely chopped pecans

In a heavy sauce pan, combine all ingredients except pecans. Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly until the mixture registers 249 degrees on a candy thermometer or forms a soft ball when dropped in cold water. Cool the mixture then beat until creamy. Gently stir in the pecans. Drop by teaspoon on waxed paper. Cool completely before serving. These store wonderfully.