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Press Release

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### Healthy Roux

With the emphasis on entertaining this month, gumbos go a long way when you have a large gathering. Luckily for Southerners, the Cajuns developed the famous gumbo from the French, who lacked the ingredients they needed to make their favorite fish stew, bouillabaisse, after they settled in South Louisiana. Creative Cajuns substituted readily available seafood, herbs and vegetables and the result was gumbo.

It's an open secret that a good gumbo is only as good as its roux, a mixture of flour and oil cooked over low heat that is the foundation for the gumbo. There are three classic roux types-white, blond and brown. The color is determined by how long the mixture is cooked.

The typical Louisiana roux is brown and has a nutty flavor perfect for soups and sauces. Using just the right amount of oil is critical to outcome of your roux, but there is good news: roux can be made without oil.

Colette Leistner, Ph.D., R.D., at Nicholls State University helped the LSU AgCenter develop a fact sheet about making a healthy roux by omitting the oil. She shares two fat-free roux recipes:

#### Stove Top Roux Flour

2 cups all purpose flour

Sift flour after measuring. Place flour in large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Cook flour until it turns light golden brown (the color of brown sugar), stirring constantly and shaking skillet occasionally, about 25-30 minutes. If flour begins to darken too quickly, remove from heat to cool, continuing to stir. Reduce heat slightly before returning flour to stove. The light brown flour darkens when liquid is added. Sift into an airtight container to store until needed. Roux flour will keep for up to three months.

## Oven Roux Flour

2 cups all purpose flour

Sift flour evenly over a large jelly roll pan (cookie sheet with sides). Place in the oven on the second shelf from the top (to prevent burning). Bake at 400 degree for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven. Stir the flour checking the color. If not brown enough return to the oven and check it every 10 minutes until it reaches the color of light brown sugar. Remove from the oven and let cool completely, stirring it occasionally. Sift into an airtight container and store.

Leistner states that roux flour needs to be added to the gumbo toward the end of cooking, just before it is ready to be served, rather than using the conventional method of making the roux and adding the ingredients. If converting recipes the amount of roux flour is cup per cup.

A common recipe of roux uses  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup flour and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup oil. With the elimination of oil, you will have 110 fewer fat grams in your recipe.

## Chicken Okra Gumbo

6 cups low-fat, low-sodium chicken broth  
4-6 cups water  
3 pounds chicken pieces, skinned  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds fresh or frozen okra,  
cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch slices  
1 large tomato, diced or 14 oz. can of tomatoes  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp black pepper  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp cayenne pepper  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry roux  
2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups cooked rice

In large soup pot, combine chicken broth and water. Place over medium-low heat. Meanwhile, heat large nonstick skillet coated with vegetable oil cooking spray over medium heat, about 2-3 minutes. Sauté chicken pieces until browned on all sides, about 10 minutes. Do this in batches if necessary. Remove chicken to plate, cover loosely, and set aside.

Coat same skillet with more cooking spray and sauté okra over medium heat until slightly softened, about 10 minutes if frozen, a bit longer if fresh. Remove to another plate and set aside.

In same skillet, stir in tomato, onion, garlic, black pepper and cayenne pepper and salt. Cook until onion becomes translucent, about 5 minutes. Combine all ingredients, including roux flour, into broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low. Cover and cook until chicken is cooked, 30-40 minutes. Serving size: 2 cups gumbo and ½ cup rice. **Approximate values per serving:** 410 calories, 9 g fat, 81 mg cholesterol, 247 mg sodium, 48 g carbohydrates, 35 g protein