

Fear is needless

I was afraid. The next step was the video call. Our conversation couldn't start because there was a technical problem which freaked me out because I am not good with computers. We solved it and we moved on to our conversation! I had prepared an introduction, and there was no need for it. Randy Rosenzweig, my native speaker was incredible in explaining everything to me. From start to finish he explained me the history, the staples and his experience with this cuisine.

Gumbo, a soup with meat or fish is a staple in Louisiana comfort food that can be made in the French way, the Spanish way or the African way. But they have these ingredients in common: a roux (a binder that is made of equal parts flour and fat), the holy trinity (celery, bell pepper and onions), a broth (vegetable, chicken or beef) and okra. A commonly used herb in Cajun cuisine is filé, made from dried and ground sassafras leaves. I had a feeling my native speaker loves Gumbo as he kept using it as an example for staple ingredients and the rest.

I had never heard of Cajun food before but was open-minded to learn all about a new cuisine. Cajun food originates from Louisiana, but not from the whole state. Louisiana has so far been divided in two parts, the north and the south because they are culturally diverse. In the north, the settlers came from eastern America, specifically Texas whereas in the south, there were different settlers, you have Spanish, African Americans, Native Americans and French settlers. The French settlers are the French Canadians that were deported from Canada after they refused to swear to the British crown. The only problem was that the Spanish had taken over Louisiana by the time they came back from Canada. They forced them to live on the lands, the Acadians (comes from French Canadians) learned that way to live of what was around them. You can see it in the ingredients of Cajun recipes. It's all regional food and seafood because the south borders with the wave of Mexico. The Acadians learned new cooking methods from all the different people around them, which is why there are different versions of certain recipes.

Randy grew up in Shreveport in the north and still ate Cajun dishes on some weekdays and other days he ate typical American dishes. During those weekdays he ate a lot of rice because at lunch they served rice as a side dish. Rice is in Louisiana often served as a side dish because of the large produce in the state. However, on the weekends Randy ate traditional Jewish food. If you haven't noticed, Rosenzweig is not a typical American name, it's originally from Germany and means red tree or bush. This showed me that even if you have a different culture, you can still appreciate a cuisine that is different from yours.

I tried to make a roux and it went awful but I am determined that I will excel in making a roux and perhaps try making shrimp gumbo. Otherwise, I will have to find a restaurant to try Cajun food. A video call was all it took to get me this intrigued by a new cuisine. The blend of meat and fish astonished me but is not something I will be eager to try. I'm afraid of that combination just like I was afraid in the beginning of this project and the video call because we went off topic quite a lot. We talked about cats, school systems, pronunciation, books and so much more. But at last, I did not need to be scared, all times it turned out great and if

things would go wrong like me making a roux you will learn from that and try better afterwards. So maybe I should try meat and fish in one dish.