

Leah Chase

Chef, Dooky Chase's Restaurant; Philanthropist; "Queen of Creole Cuisine"

New Orleans, Louisiana



When she was a child growing up in rural Louisiana, Leah Chase's father gave her three rules to live by. The first was to pray. The second, to work. And the third, to do for others. "I've lived by those rules every day of my 93 years," Chase said. "I could not live a day without doing something for someone else. I wouldn't be happy."

That's why, on most days, you can still find her in the kitchen at Dooky Chase's Restaurant preparing others her famous Creole cuisine. She's been a fixture there since the 1940s when she and her husband, Edgar "Dooky" Chase, Jr., took over the restaurant from her in-laws.

Back then, the renowned New Orleans establishment was not only a place to try Chase's home-cooked meals, but also a cultural meeting spot.

During the 1960s, people of all races would gather there to discuss the Civil Rights Movement. Dooky Chase's has maintained its cultural significance over time, catering to celebrities and politicians alike. But it's the everyday patrons who come to sit and talk with Chase each day that continue to inspire her.

"People are the most important thing in life. Living is beautiful. But living with people – meeting people, thinking about people, helping people – that's what makes life worth living," she said.

After more than 70 years in the kitchen, Chase knows how to create dishes that are both healthful and flavorful. But she believes eating healthfully is about more than ingredients. "I am a big believer in eating in moderation," she said.

"We used to only eat fried chicken on Sundays. Now, people want it every day. But you can't. You need to have something to look forward to or it isn't special."

Chase also believes healthier communities start at home. "We need to get people back to the dinner table, to talk and practice good manners and eat simple meals. Because family is where it all begins," she said.

Although Chase is considered the "Queen of Creole Cuisine," that doesn't mean she's done learning. "As you go along in life, you learn to do different things. But, most important, you learn to be a part of things. You have to play your part to make a difference," she said. "And that's what I do through cooking."



Chicken Creole with Shrimp

Healthy food tastes better. That's what chef Leah Chase proves with this authentic Creole dish, which combines fiber-filled okra, lean chicken and antioxidant-rich shrimp.

For recipe, visit AAHCalendar.com/recipes/june.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 1968: Henry Lewis becomes first black musical director of an American symphony orchestra – New Jersey Symphony.	2 1971: Samuel L. Gravely Jr. becomes first African American admiral in the U.S. Navy.	3 2008: Senator Barack Obama wins Democratic presidential nomination, becoming the first African American nominee of a major U.S. political party.	4 1979: President Jimmy Carter proclaimed the month of June as Black Music Month.
5 1987: Dr. Mae C. Jemison becomes first African American woman astronaut.	6 1831: First annual People of Color convention held in Philadelphia.	7 1917: Poetess Gwendolyn Brooks, first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize (poetry, 1950), born.	8 2011: Clara Luper, Oklahoma civil rights icon who led sit-ins at drugstore lunch counters in Oklahoma in 1958, dies.	9 1995: Lincoln J. Ragsdale, pioneer fighter pilot of World War II, dies.	10 1854: James Augustine Healy, first black Roman Catholic bishop, ordained a priest in Notre Dame Cathedral.	11 2014: Ruby Dee, award-winning actress whose seven-decade career included triumphs on stage and screen, dies.
12 1963: Medgar W. Evers, civil rights leader, assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi.	13 1967: Thurgood Marshall nominated to Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson.	14 1864: Congress rules equal pay for all soldiers. Flag Day	15 1913: Dr. Effie O'Neal Ellis, first black woman to hold an executive position in the American Medical Association, born.	16 1970: Kenneth A. Gibson elected mayor of Newark, New Jersey, first African American mayor of a major Eastern city.	17 1775: Minuteman Peter Salem fights in the Battle of Bunker Hill.	18 1942: Harvard University medical student Bernard Whitfield Robinson commissioned as the Navy's first black officer.
19 1865: Blacks in Texas are notified of Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863. Father's Day Juneteenth	20 1953: Albert W. Dent of Dillard University elected president of the National Health Council.	21 1821: African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z.) Church established.	22 1897: William Barry patents postmarking and cancelling machine.	23 1940: Sprinter Wilma Rudolph, winner of three gold medals at 1960 Summer Olympics, born.	24 1964: Carl T. Rowan appointed director of the United States Information Agency.	25 2009: Michael Jackson, musician and entertainer, dies.
26 1975: Dr. Samuel Blanton Rosser becomes first African American certified in pediatric surgery.	27 1991: Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall announces his retirement.	28 1911: Samuel J. Battle becomes first black policeman in New York City.	29 2006: Lloyd Richards, theater pioneer and Tony Award winner for direction of <i>Fences</i> , dies on his 87th birthday.	30 2015: Misty Copeland becomes first African American female principal dancer with the American Ballet Theater.		



Alexander P. Ashbourne, a grocer from California, invented the biscuit cutter in 1875. He also went on to patent a process for refining coconut oil.⁶



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