

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR CLASSIC ITALIAN/SICILIAN COOKING WITH A UNIQUE, LOCAL TWIST?



Organic and naturally-grown products. Produce from Mazzi's farms. A cuisine rich in tradition, combining new and local flavors. You'll find the original calzone, lasagna and ravioli alongside wild Oregon salmon with roasted garlic and fresh herbs from our own farm.

Family owned and now celebrating 35 years of preparing the favorite foods of Papa Mazzi and our family.

Takeout and private dining available. We're at 3377 E. Amazon & 687-2252.

Mazzi's
Life is good

VISIT WWW.MAZZIS.COM

said, "You got one of these guys working here?" That blew me away."

Not to mention that his personality and philosophy were stifled working for other chefs. "I got tired of making food that I can't say I would sit down and enjoy myself," he said.

Between the cart and the current home of the Soul Food Kitchen, Papa had a year-long engagement as the featured chef for Joe's Bar and Grill. But even with the freedom to prepare his own dishes, he says it still wasn't a true expression of himself or the Soul Food Kitchen. "No matter how you slice it, it was still going to be Joe's Bar and Grill," he said. "You went into a loud bar where you could grub on some good soul food and listen to some loud Metallica music."

The new 391 West 11th Ave. location was the final step, a place Papa can finally call his own. He shifted in the green chair again and smiled. "I just like the idea of having that little neighborhood joint that I used to go to when I was living down South ... without waiting in the long lines, without feeling like you didn't dress up good enough to go in there," he said. One of those secret treasures in every U.S. town where "the locals eat" and the food is good and cheap, the Soul Food Kitchen needed that relaxed, personable atmosphere directly connected to its food.

The interior of the new restaurant is curiously decorated, revealing a little bit of Papa's soul, his personal history. The artifacts blend together to give a quick glimpse into his life. Art and advertisements including posters, photos, African sculpture and mechanical dolls of James Brown, Louis Armstrong and Ray Charles give it a slightly "lived-in" feeling, eclectic and cozy.

An illustrated poster advertising a Lee Perry concert sits right alongside a classic print from an old photo of a Southern baptism where dozens of black people in suits and dresses watch anxiously as the baptized are dipped swiftly in a still pond (a relic that traveled with Papa from the lunch cart). A poster of Rick James hitting a spliff hangs on the back wall. And a photo of Muhammad Ali with that eagle-eyed look watches carefully over a display case housing original Papa's Soul Food Kitchen merchandise.

Tender, runny, smoke-infused (we're talking real smoke, none of that liquid junk) pulled pork, tangy collard greens and peppery black eyed peas and rice gushed down my pipes as if I were a frat boy executing my best beer bong.

The menu reflects an amalgam of Papa's lifelong experience preparing various black cuisines. His cooking education started in California. The son of two '70s Black Panther members, he spent a lot of time around his mother's restaurant, The Colonial.

"She used to cater to a black motorcycle club called the Great Kings of Africa," Papa said. His mother's restaurant specialized in everything from Monte Christo sandwiches to "down home pigfeet," and Papa worked there from the time he was 6 to 16 doing everything from cleaning to cooking. "I remember brushing the felt on the pool tables," he said with a sentimental smile and a sigh. His mother has since passed away.

"When I got back from the South I went back to visit mom and we cooked food side by side," he said. "For some odd reason she still thought that she had it going on over me. But I surprised her a little bit. Every now and then we'll put in some of my mom's recipes. Like some of her smothered chicken and rice or some of her oxtail stew."

He won't share any of the ingredients in his signature sauces or seasonings. But following in the tradition of his mother as well as some of his cooking mentors, everything served at the Soul Food Kitchen is made from scratch. From the signature rub applied to the smoked pork, chicken and ribs to the sausages used in the gumbo, Papa adds his touch to everything.

So when Papa says, "You'll have to wait just a little longer for the collard greens to finish," it's probably in your best interest to marvel at Ray, James and Louis for a just a little longer. You can't rush greatness. **EW**



THE KIVA

GROCERS,
WINE
MERCHANTS
& BOOKSELLERS

- Specialty, Gourmet & Organic Foods
- Fresh Organic Produce
- Bulk Foods, Herbs, Spices, Coffees & Teas
- More than 200 Cheeses & Deli Meats, Sliced or Cut To Order
- Wine, Champagne & Beer
- Vitamins & Body Care Products



MON-SAT 9-8 • SUN 10-5

125 W. 11th Ave, DOWNTOWN EUGENE • 342-8666

Best Eco-Friendly

BEST
of Eugene
2004-2005

Veggie and Vegan • Breakfast and Lunch

Morning Glory Cafe

*We strive to create an environment
where everyone feels welcome
and is treated with the dignity
and respect we all deserve.*
-Peace-

7:30am - 3:30pm • 7 days a week

687-0709 • 450 Willamette St. • Eugene