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Cheap eats, Cajun-style

Gulf Coast grub is blowing up in Williamsburg. TONY rounds up the best new NOLA-inspired spots, where authentic food is just part of the appeal.

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Jen-n-Outlaws Fish Fry and Crawfish Boil

Jen-n-Outlaws Fish Fry and Crawfish Boil

Brick-and-mortar restaurants go to great lengths to manufacture Southern charm. Yet few can match this roving DIY outfit, the brainchild of Alabama-born Paul Outlaw and art-school pal Jen Catron. Last spring, the duo decided to buy an American flag—emblazoned truck on Craigslist and bring boiled crayfish—overnighted from LeBlanc Farms in Louisiana and prepared Cajun-style with corn on the cob, potatoes and plenty of cayenne—directly to the streets of New York. Roll up your sleeves and wrestle open the sweet critters at a pair of communal picnic tables, which are set on a raised platform connected to the back of the rig. The other items scrawled on the compact, handwritten menu are equally rewarding: massive cornmeal-battered catfish po' boys (\$10) and superlative fried pickles (\$6), cut thick and served with refreshing buttermilk-dill dipping sauce. Boozing is verboten in the streets, but homemade sweet tea (\$2) hits the spot. When crayfish season ends, Catron says, they'll move on to gumbo. *Visit the truck's Twitter feed (@jenandoutlaws) for locations. Sat noon--9pm. Cash only.*



Tchoup Shop

For New Orleans Saints fans, there's no better game-day clubhouse than d.b.a. Brooklyn. Not only does the craft-beer mecca—which has a location in the Big Easy—stock some of the best suds in Kings County, but it also packs in a spirited crowd of Who Dats and Cajun-food enthusiasts for New York's only Nawlins-style tailgate. Ex-NOLA resident Simon Glenn—a veteran cook whose rsum includes a stint at Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Spice Market—mans the grill at the pop-up barbecue, incorporating homemade condiments into grub that doesn't hold back the heat. A fiery pepper jelly is slathered on addictive wings (\$8), which are lightly crisped then showered with bright cilantro. Curried ketchup and Creole mustard, meanwhile, can be matched with peel-and-eat shrimp and spicy hot links shipped from a Louisiana grocery store (cool the burn with a refreshing \$6 Kelso Pils). Glenn will keep serving his ever-evolving menu—which recently included dense buttermilk biscuits (\$2) and gamey duck-and-okra gumbo (\$7)—on Sundays (2:30 until the food runs out, usually around 8pm) and during Saints games throughout the football season (Abita bottles and Hurricane shots, both \$4, are available whenever the Black and Gold are on the field). *d.b.a. Brooklyn, 113 North 7th St between Berry St and Wythe Ave (718-218-6006). Visit the Tchoup Shop's Twitter feed (@tchoupshop) for schedule updates. Cash only.*



Goods

Goods doesn't look much like a Southern restaurant at first glance: A curbside kitchen-cum-takeout-window is housed in a gleaming silver 1946 trailer—reclaimed from a junkyard in Ithaca, New York—and the makeshift dining room is a leafy, handsomely appointed garden. But for N'awlins native Alex McCreery—a former sous chef at the Big Easy's fine-dining stalwart Commander's Palace—it's the ideal place to showcase the more casual side of his hometown food culture. In addition to flipping the LaFrieda burgers that the truck launched with in June, he's been steadily working his roots into an ambitious weekly menu. A recent Sunday brought a "NOLA butcher's plate," featuring house-made pickles alongside straight-from-Louisiana pork boudin (a Cajun-style sausage) and smoky andouille. Meanwhile, a spicy fried-green tomato sandwich (\$6.75)—topped with tangy red-cabbage slaw and mild farm cheese—has been a mainstay. Cold-weather specials such as gumbos and jambalayas—including a duck-and-oyster version—are in the works for fall, when heat lamps and a booze license promise to help keep customers warm. Don't leave without an order of beignets (three for \$3.25)—the doughy mouthfuls are fried to order and dusted with enough powdered sugar to leave you looking like Tony Montana. 571 Lorimer St at Metropolitan Ave (347-763-1622). Mon--Thu 7am--11pm, Fri 7am--midnight, Sat 9am--midnight, Sun 9am--10pm. Cash only.



Honeychiles'

While gastroduives like the Commodore match their unfussy food with deliberate seediness, real dives that serve tasty grub are a rarer breed. The Charleston—a dimly lit, rock-heavy watering hole on Bedford Avenue—has stormed the latter category with the addition of a Cajun-themed takeout window called Honeychiles'. Order from a short, dirt-cheap menu before snagging a pitcher of Abita (\$18) from the bar while you wait. The "O.G." (\$5) po' boy is the most joyously junky offering: The humongous two-hander resembles a poutine sandwich, with a mound of salt-and-pepper fries smothered in shredded-beef gravy and stuffed inside a mayo-slathered hero. "French fry po' boys are actually considered the original po' boy," explains Virginia-bred musician Jameson Proctor, who opened the bare-bones operation over the summer with two other Southern transplants. He jokes that they were inspired by their own selfish food cravings ("we couldn't find the stuff we missed most from back home"), but anyone looking at the prices would peg them for a generous bunch. At just \$5, a heap of andouille-and-chicken jambalaya, served on white rice to offset the heat, is a deal too good to pass up. The Charleston, 174 Bedford Ave between North 7th and 8th Sts (718-599-9699). Mon--Wed 5pm--2am; Thu 5pm--3am; Fri, Sat noon--3am; Sun noon--2am. Cash only.



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