

# File' Gumbo Ya Ya

Revised 11-25-25

Darrell Phillips

Submitted by Dianna Phillips, granddaughter\*

\*Relation to Andy and/or Flora Lehr

## Ingredients

Turkey or chicken carcass with plenty meat still on the bone or a whole chicken weighing several pounds	
High quality sausage preferably andouille	1 ½ pounds
White onions – large	2
Bell peppers – any color	2
Celery	1 bunch
Garlic cloves	2
Bay leaf	1
Tomatoes – Rotel, optional	1 can
Green onions	
Flour	½ cup
Shortening or bacon drippings	½ cup
Rice – high quality, extra long grain	
Salt	to taste
Pepper	to taste
File'	to taste

## Directions

1. Peel and chop onions into ½ squares
2. Remove pulp and seeds from the bell peppers. Cut the peppers into 1 inch by ½ inch squares
3. Remove foliage and base of the celery. Slice the celery lengthwise and cut into ¼ inch squares
4. Peel and remove the hard ends of the garlic. Smash the cloves between flat of knife and cutting board.
5. Peel off lower casing and roots from green onions. Chop lower white parts into ¼ lengths. Cut the green tops into fine little circles. Reserve the green tops as a garnish on the finished dish
6. Put the (turkey or chicken) carcass into a deep stock pot and cover. Simmer until all the flesh falls from the bones. Strain the liquid (it's called a "stock"), remove all skin, bones and tough pieces from then remaining solids.
7. In a 6-quart cast iron pot with cover, brown sausage in medium-high heat. Remove and set aside.
8. Lower the cooking temperature to medium. Heat ½ cup shortening. Add ½ cup flour. Stir regularly until the mixture is a rich deep brown. Do not allow the roux to burn. Add white onions, celery and bell peppers. Continue over medium heat stirring regularly until the vegetables wilt. Add green onion bottoms and continue for about five more minutes.

## File' Gumbo Ya Ya

Revised 11-25-25

9. Add 8 cups stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer while stirring regularly. The mixture will thicken in about 30 minutes.
10. Add ½ cup water and simmer for 10 or so minutes. Continue adding water and simmering until you reach the consistency that you like.
11. Add bay leaf and(optional) tomatoes.
12. Add salt and pepper to taste
13. Add turkey or chicken and sausage. Cook for about two hours on the lowest heat, stirring and tasting regularly until it's so good you want to shout your own accolades.

### Now for the file'

File' is ground up sassafras leaf and a little file' goes a long way. It has a wonderful taste and immediately adds to the substance of gumbo, and...it's so darned "hard core" Cajun. Some File' comes in a shake bottle or, it comes in a bag, tin or screw top bottle. The real way to serve file' is to pour into small bowl and add to the gumbo with a teeny spoon.

14. Pour file' into a small bowl. Add to the gumbo with a teeny spoon.
  - Never add the file' until you are ready to go from spoon to mouth
  - Never cook the file' in the gumbo
  - Avoid using file' in any okra gumbo

Serves 8, but if a few more show up, cook more rice. That's the Cajun way.

Serve over white rice with a green salad and French bread.

Leave the bay leaf in the gumbo. Someone will get it in their serving and it starts a great conversation (particularly if you read a little about sassafras before your guests arrive).

If you plate-up before serving, fill the bottom of a shallow bowl with gumbo. Place a heaping mound of white rice in the center, then sprinkle the green onion top around the bowl. Wow! Can't you just see the presentation now!

If you plate at the table, put some green onions in a small bowl with a spoon on the table so your guests can sprinkle over the dish. A bottle of Louisiana type hot sauce at the table is just the perfect final touch.

Final note: Gumbo tastes better the next day and "way more" (permissible English for a Cajun) better the day after. Gumbo freezes great and it continues to get better a few weeks. Just don't add the file' til you're ready to serve.