



NO TWO ARE ALIKE

CHEFS IN CHARLESTON, S.C. HAVE FOUND THEIR OWN WAY
OF GIVING NEW LIFE TO AN OLD CLASSIC.

BY ASHLEY BRUGHETT

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU'RE SURE TO RUN INTO
DURING A VISIT TO CHARLESTON, S.C.; FRIENDLY CON-
VERSATION WITH STRANGERS, SPOOKY TALES OF HAUNT-
ED PLACES AND SHRIMP & GRITS.

The third should be no surprise as grits were declared the official state food of South Carolina in 1976. But the history of this delicacy dates much further back — back to around 1584 when when Native Americans introduced it to settlers that came into Jamestown, Virginia. This dish of ground up corn has been a staple of the south ever since. In fact, the region stretching from the Carolinas to Louisiana is commonly referred to as “America’s Grit Belt.”

Many years ago, South Carolina shrimpers added new life to this common food by adding shrimp and bacon grease. This dish, referred to as “breakfast shrimp,” was a simple and easy break-

fast using ingredients readily available. Shrimp and grits was the lowcountry’s best kept secret until *New York Times* food editor Craig Claiborne introduced the nation to the delicacy in 1985. The culinary world hasn’t been the same since.

Today, there are thousands of variations of this recipe, but you’re sure to find the best creations in the place where it all began. Any restaurant in Charleston, S.C. worth its salt is sure to feature some type of shrimp and grits dish on their menu. But much like a snowflake, no two are ever the same, yet all are surprisingly delicious.

EXECUTIVE CHEF DON DRAKE AT THE POPULAR RESTAURANT, MAGNOLIAS, (185 E. BAY ST.) SAYS HIS SEAFOOD OVER GRITS DISH ACTUALLY BEGAN AS AN ACCIDENT.

The original recipe was “Spinach Wrapped Scallops with Lobster” but that proved to be a pain to prepare, so he decided to cook the seafood together and pour it over grits, something they had plenty of in the kitchen. Topped with fried spinach, they had an undeniable hit says Drake, “Since we put the seafood and grits on the menu, it has become a bestseller. People come to the Lowcountry and want to eat shrimp and grits; this dish is our more luxurious, uptown version of the classic dish.”

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Right around the corner is Poogan’s Porch, (72 Queen St.) and if you can get past the fact that it’s been voted as the “Third Most Haunted Place in America” by the *Travel Channel* then you’ll enjoy

also ham and at their food experience you

pper’s dreamy boutiques, arriving to my restaurant this dish with you can also ordinary with a spin on the shrimp and e. While she has that taste

of the original. During a trip to the lowcountry of Charleston, S.C. you’ll learn that the options are endless when it comes to adding new life to an old classic. No matter where you choose to dine, you can be sure that shrimp and grits will be a safe bet every time

