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ANDREW ZIMMERN'S

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Louisiana's Northshore

Chef John Besh grew up fishing and crabbing in the waterways of Louisiana's St. Tammany Parish, aka Louisiana's Northshore, an outdoors wonderland located less than an hour's drive from New Orleans.

Besh recalls the outings with fondness but remembers what happened after the fishing trips with even deeper affection: Cap Feast of "rusty-colored redfish court bouillon loaded with shrimp, crab and oysters," spicy boiled crawfish, succulent shrimp creole and his mother Imelda's trout amandine.

"The aroma of toasted almonds and brown butter – Mom's trout amandine – is my foremost food sense memory," Besh wrote in his "My New Orleans" cookbook, which spawned a PBS cooking series of the same name. (His second cookbook, "John Besh: My Family Table," is also now a PBS series airing nationwide.)

Besh credits his mother with

teaching him how to cook fish, a skill that has served him well. Now a celebrity chef and James Beard Award-winner, Besh is a familiar face as a judge on Bravo's show "Top Chef," and a successful restaurateur with a number of notable New Orleans area dining rooms, including the lovely **La Provence** in Lacombe, on the Northshore.

La Provence serves memorable renditions of crab bisque and cornmeal-crust oysters and its grilled lemon fish with a crawfish ragout over cauliflower puree and Meyer lemon herb butter is the restaurant's most popular seafood dish, according to Besh. But La Provence isn't the only chef-driven restaurant showcasing



Elegant food like this lovely tuna tartare are the hallmarks of La Provence in Lacombe.

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– Chef John Besh



John Besh at La Provence, Lacombe

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Boiled crab at Kenney's Seafood, Slidell.



Buster's Restaurant, downtown Covington



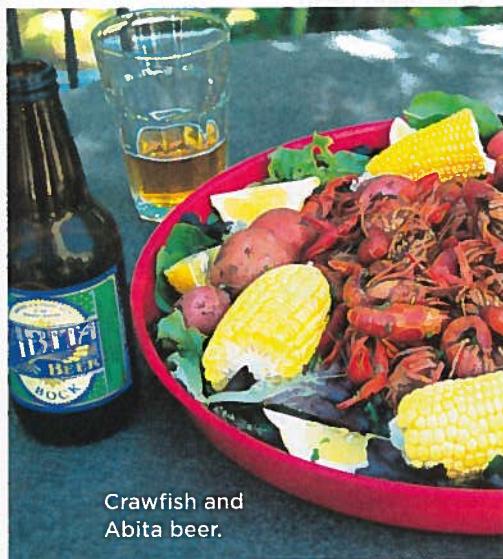
Liz's Where Y'at Diner shrimp and eggplant napoleon.



Zachary's oysters with champagne cream sauce



Liz's fried green tomato and shrimp salad.



Crawfish and Abita beer.

Louisiana seafood. Kim Kringlie's **Dakota** is known for its silken lump crab and Brie soup and diners can't get enough of the crabmeat ravigote – a martini glass of cold jumbo lump crabmeat with caper horseradish dressing – at **Gallagher's Grill**. The shrimp au gratin at **Zachary's** is a locals' favorite, along with the restaurant's lovely little crab and shrimp beignets. Fish is expertly handled at **Del Porto**, and at **LOLA**, whose chefs Keith and Nealy Frenz were named king and queen of Louisiana seafood.

You'll find plenty of elegant seafood on the Northshore but you don't have to go upscale to feast on the bounty of the bayou. There are scores of mom-and-pop eateries, seafood markets and casual locals' joints from one end of the parish to the other.

Golden-fried shrimp are piled high on loaves of crusty French bread for po-boys from places like **Bear's**, **Palmettos** or **Kenney's Seafood** in Slidell. Or boiled and paired with perfectly fried green tomatoes at **Liz's Where Y'at Diner**. Plump, salty oysters are served raw on the half-shell, cold and luscious, at **Acme Oyster House**, **Buster's** and **Speckled T's**. They're also chargrilled at spots like **Pardo's** and the **Chimes** or transformed via garlic and butter into

Oysters La Luzianne at **Louie and the Redhead Lady**, a favorite of "Diner's, Drive-ins and Dives" host Guy Fieri. Crawfish get their due at **Bergeron's**, where they star in pistolettes, etouffee and crawfish pie, and at places like **French Market Seafood** or **Bateau's** where you can buy crimson boiled crawfish and fixings.

Home to **Abita Brewery and Pontchartrain Vineyards**, the Northshore's culinary scene is a draw for visitors, including New Orleanians who come to dine al fresco on decks with a water view or just to get away from the city's more frenetic pace. With 80,000-plus acres of wilderness preserve, the Northshore is big on soft adventure and natural beauty. Visitors can rent a bike and ride the scenic **Tammany Trace** through eclectic towns and green spaces, fish from a kayak (also rentable) on **Bayou Lacombe**, tour the lovely **Honey Island Swamp**, feed a giraffe from their hand at Global Wildlife – or relax on the porch of a quaint bed and breakfast.

Visitors to the Northshore, just across the lake from New Orleans, experience the world John Besh treasures, a place where great meals – and great memories – are made.

Learn more by visiting www.LouisianaNorthshore.com



COME HUNGRY, WE'LL FEED YOU WELL

Life's a feast in St. Tammany Parish, aka Louisiana's Northshore, home to celebrity chef John Besh and Abita Beer. Our soulful food reflects heritage and hearty appetites and showcases Louisiana's bounty. Come, join us. We'll feed you well. Visit our website to explore the Northshore's rich culinary scene, less than an hour north of New Orleans.

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