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Accessibility

## What Does It Mean to Be a Leader in These Times?

In today's political climate, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words ring louder than ever. His warning about being "integrated into a burning house" resonates deeply, reflecting a time when Black history, civil rights, disability rights, queer rights, and women's rights are all under attack. For many, it's clear that this house has been burning for a while.

The question is no longer what's happening?—it's what are we doing about it? Leadership feels scarce. Where are the thought leaders, the revolutionaries, the voices that refuse to be silenced? The challenge isn't just about identifying injustice but confronting personal responsibility. Are people too entitled, too distracted, or convinced that their influence doesn't matter?

The truth is, leadership starts in the mirror. It's not about having a huge platform or millions of followers. It's about using the tools available—whether that's educating friends about executive orders, sharing knowledge on social media, or simply having conversations that matter. Change begins with small steps, and those steps add up.

But leadership isn't just about action; it's about compassion. In times of struggle, it's easy for communities to become fragmented, for frustration and fear to pull people apart. True leadership means understanding that healing is as important as progress. It takes leaders who can move with empathy, who can recognize the pain in their communities and work to bring people together rather than letting current conditions tear them apart.

It's going to take compassionate leaders to heal our communities. Leaders who listen as much as they speak. Leaders who understand that being present for others, fostering unity, and building bridges are just as critical as standing up against injustice. In moments like these, the heart of leadership is love—for our people, our history, and our shared future.

As communities grapple with these challenges, sometimes comfort comes from tradition. And nothing says comfort like a hearty, homemade gumbo. So, after a week of reflecting on leadership, here's a Texas-Style Gumbo recipe to nourish the soul and remind us of the power of coming together.



## Recipe of the Week: Texas Style Gumbo

### Ingredients:

- 2 lbs snow crabs
- 1 lb smoked sausage (from B&W Meat Market)
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 lb lump crab meat
- 1 lb chicken drumettes
- 1/2 cup dried shrimp
- 2 bay leaves
- 2-3 packs of Louisiana gumbo base (for thickness, use 2 for thinner gumbo, 3 for thicker)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 cups chicken broth
- Tony Chachere's seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder – all to taste
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Vegetable oil (for pan-frying)
- Steamed white rice (for serving)
- Green onions and fresh parsley (for garnish)
- Premium Saltine Crackers (for serving on the side)

### Instructions:

#### 1. Season and Pan-Fry the Chicken:

Generously season the chicken drumettes with Tony Chachere's™, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper to taste. In a large skillet, heat vegetable oil over medium heat. Once hot, pan-fry the chicken until browned on all sides and cooked through. Remove and set aside.

#### 2. Brown the Sausage:

In the same skillet, add more vegetable oil if needed, then add the smoked sausage. Cook until browned and slightly crispy. Remove and set aside with the chicken.

#### 3. Build the Gumbo Base:

In a large pot, sauté the chopped onions, bell pepper, celery, and garlic until softened and fragrant. Stir in 2-3 packages of Louisiana gumbo base, depending on how thick you prefer your gumbo. Slowly add the chicken broth, stirring constantly to ensure a smooth, rich base.

#### 4. Add the Proteins:

Return the browned chicken and sausage to the pot. Add the dried shrimp and bay leaves. Let the mixture boil gently for about 45 minutes, allowing all the flavors to blend. Taste the broth and adjust the seasonings as needed—add more Tony Chachere's™, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, or pepper if desired.

#### 5. Add the Seafood:

In the last 10 minutes of cooking, add the snow crabs and peeled, deveined shrimp. Stir gently and let simmer until the shrimp turn pink and the crab is heated through.

#### 6. Finish with Lump Crab:

Once cooking is complete, gently fold in the lump crab meat, stirring lightly to keep the crab intact. Heat just until warmed through.

#### 7. Serve:

Ladle the gumbo over steamed white rice, garnish with chopped green onions and fresh parsley, and serve with Premium Saltine Crackers on the side for that perfect Southern touch.

This gumbo isn't just a dish; it's a reminder of resilience, tradition, and the power of community. Just like in leadership, every ingredient plays its part. Together, they create something greater than the sum of their parts. So, while reflecting on how to lead in these challenging times, enjoy this hearty meal that brings comfort and connection to the table.

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