



## Discovering Victorian Splendor & Decadent Cuisine in New Orleans

December 26, 2010 By Isabel Chesak

**We're excited to introduce you to our friend, Isabel, a well-traveled food writer.** Isabel recently visited some wonderful Victorian mansions and plantations in New Orleans and has shared her trip report with us. Don't miss the recipe at the end – Enjoy!

**Ah, New Orleans, NOLA, the Big Easy, the Crescent City.** Even though it is the end of October my friend Lorraine and I are enjoying summer weather here. The temperature is hovering around 85 degrees-no need for a sweater or jacket. We are here with the [Victorian Society of America](#) to visit Victorian homes and plantations, also to do some good eating in this colorful city celebrated for its restaurants. We do just that on our arrival night by visiting "Cochon" ("pig" in French). Cochon smokes its own meats and sausages. It is located in a former factory with battered brick walls and varnished wood lending modern touches to the restaurant. The ceilings are tall and an open kitchen beckons.

The following day we tour the French Quarter or "Le Vieux Carre" which dates from the founding of New Orleans. A visit to the Gallier House Museum is in order. The museum includes the very latest in comforts and conveniences of the 19th century including a spacious bathroom with hot water and full ventilation for the hot summer days of the city. Period antiques and fine rosewood furniture are also on display.

Next day our bus takes us on a tour of the Great River Road with its parade of plantations. Once cash crops of sugar and cotton provided the money for the upkeep of these enormous plantation homes, an example being Houmas House. Established in mid-18th century, it is named for the Houmas Indian tribe. A Greek Revival manse situated on 98,000 acres of cane sugar earned it the nickname "Sugar Palace". The house was saved from Yankee marauders by owner John Burnside, an Irishman, who claimed British citizenship to the soldiers, thus saving the plantation from destruction. The restored house and its magnificent tropical gardens welcome us to lunch in the property's adjacent restaurant. Lunch at Houma's begins with an excellent creamy pumpkin soup with traces of curry and sweet corn. (See recipe below). A chicken Caesar salad follows and then a decadent dessert..

### **Bisque of Curried Pumpkin, Crawfish and Corn**

(from Houmas House, compliments of Executive Chef Jeremy Langlois of Latil's Landing, featured in 86 Recipes: New Orleans, edited by Lorin Gaudin)

Ingredients: (Serves 8-10)

1 cup olive oil	2 qt. crawfish stock (or vegetable or chicken stock may be substituted)
2 cups chopped onions	2 cups fresh corn kernels
1 cup chopped bell peppers	1 lb. peeled Louisiana crawfish tails
1 cup chopped celery	1 (14 oz.) can unsweetened pumpkin
1/2 cup chopped garlic	1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 cup flour	Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup Steen's Cane Syrup	
1/4 cup curry powder	

Method: **1.** In a large pot heat olive oil over medium high heat. Add onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic. Cook until translucent or for 10 minutes. Stir in flour and cook for 2 minutes. **2.** Stir in cane syrup, curry powder, crawfish stock, corn kernels and Louisiana crawfish tails. **3.** Whisk in canned pumpkin and bring soup to a boil. Simmer 30 minutes. **4.** Add heavy whipping cream and season soup with salt and pepper to taste.