



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Orleans, Louisiana—October 7-10, 2009

(Note: All sessions subject to change except start and end time of conference.)

Wednesday, October 7

- 9 Press room open for registration on second floor of International House hotel.
- 9-11:30 One-on-one Writing Critiques with John T. Edge; sign up is on registration form.
- 10-noon AFJ Board of Directors Meeting.

Official Start of Conference

- 12:45 Welcome by Judy Walker, *The Times-Picayune*, and Tommy Simmons, *The Advocate*.

The New Orleans You Don't Know

- 1 **Beyond French, Spanish & African-American Hands in the Pot**
The less-known ethnic groups (German, Vietnamese, Honduran and more) and their vast culinary contributions. Moderated by **Elsa Hahne**, author of *You Are Where You Eat: Stories and Recipes from the Neighborhoods of New Orleans*.
- 2 **The Sicilian Connection**
The legacy of Little Palermo and why all the neighborhood restaurants serve spaghetti and meatballs. Moderated by **Sara Roahen**, author of *Gumbo Tales: Finding My Place at the New Orleans Table*.
- 3 **Creoles Are Not a Fairy Folk: An Updated Definition, with Food**
Who is a Creole? What is Creole soul? What does Creole mean in New Orleans in 2009? Moderated by filmmaker, author and *The Times-Picayune* staffer **Lolis Eric Elie**.
- 4:30 **Celebrate Our Way With a Brass Band**
Conference participants leave from the hotel entrance to dance behind a brass band 4/10th of a mile to the new Southern Food & Beverage Museum for The Taste of New Orleans.
- 5-7 Taste of New Orleans featuring **Emeril Lagasse**, 10 restaurants across the country including Emeril's, NOLA and Emeril's Delmonica locally; **Paul Prudhomme**, K-Paul's; **Donald Link**, Herbsaint Cochon and Cochon Butcher; **Susan Spicer**, Bayona; **Tommy Cvitanovich**, Drago's; **Allison Vines-Rushing** and **Slade Rushing**, MiLA; **Adolfo Garcia**, RioMar and La Boca; **Milton Prudence**, Tommy's Cuisine; and **Beth Biundo**, pastry chef, Lilette.
Brief welcome by SoFAB founder Liz Williams.
Three New Orleans cocktails, organized by Tales of the Cocktail founder **Ann Tunnerman**, served by three of the best bartenders in town. Informal tours conducted by founders of SoFAB and the new Museum of the American Cocktail. Return to hotel in groups or on your own.
Dinner on Your Own, although there will be plenty of food at the Taste of New Orleans.

Thursday, October 8

- 8-5 **Press Room Open.**
- 8:30 **The New Orleans Breakfast You Don't Know**
Local Slow Food chapter founder and cooking teacher Poppy Tooker makes Calas, a rice fritter that her group restored to the New Orleans menu.
- 9-11:50 **Digital Boot Camp: Essential Training**
What you need to know to be even more tech savvy in the ever-changing world of food journalism. Lots of ideas and ways to do what we're doing on new levels to reach a much broader audience. The latest tech: What is Blerp? What exactly is search engine optimization and how can it work for you? Finding your online voice. Be here to develop new and essential skills. **Jan Norris**, of jannorris.com, organizer.
- 11:50 **Cooking on Authentic 1831 Hearth**
Walk .51 mile (or cab) to 820 St. Louis St. in the French Quarter to historic Hermann-Grima House, to see and talk to veteran volunteers cooking on the authentic 1831 hearth with an array of clever cast-iron tools. Great tastes too. Walk through the historic house with docents.
- 12:30 **Louisiana Lunch** on the beautiful patio adjoining Broussard's Restaurant.
- 1:45 Walk off lunch returning to the hotel.
- 2 **AFJ Annual Meeting** (Open to AFJ members only; all are needed to plan for the future.)
- 3 **Through Yam-Colored Glasses: Making Sense of Place by Way of Food**
John T. Edge, AFJ Writer-in-Residence. Introduction by **Brett Anderson**, *The Times-Picayune*.
- 3:45 **The Disaster & Recovery That You Don't Know**
Short slide show by **James O'Byrne**, former *The Times-Picayune* features editor.
- 4-5:30 **Restaurants Lost and Found: Lessons and Community Spring from Disaster**
Panel moderated by **Brett Anderson**, *The Times-Picayune* restaurant critic
- 4-5:55 **One-on-One Writing Critiques** with John T. Edge; sign up is on Registration Form. NOTE: Restaurant writers and critics who want to attend Brett Anderson's 4-5:30 Restaurants Lost and Found, should sign up for a one-on-one critique from 9-11:30 on Wednesday morning.
- 7:30 **AFJ Awards Competition 2009 Banquet & Announcement of Winners**
Walk .2 mile to Restaurant August, 301 Tchoupitoulas St., Chef John Besh's flagship restaurant.

Friday, October 9

All About Sugar, Sugar—Sponsored by The Advocate in Baton Rouge

Press Room Closed

- 7 **BUS DEPARTS** front of hotel for **FIELD TRIP** sponsored by *The Advocate*
Learn the story of sugar in Louisiana, from the ground to the table. The good and the bad. Sugar's significance and future role in agrieconomics for not only the state but also the national economy. Speakers on the bus will give a historical overview of sugar and Baton Rouge on the way to the Louisiana State University (LSU) Sugar Research Station in St. Gabriel. See the sugar fields and mill.
- 10 **LSU Rural Life Museum**
The curator will recreate a historic moment in sugar history by boiling syrup in a big sugar kettle. Chef and historian John Folse will talk about **Slave and Share Share Cropper** food traditions and provide a share croppers' box lunch. The British Museum called this largest collection of 19th Louisiana material culture one of the "Top 10 Outdoor Museums in the World."

1 **Pennington Biomedical Research Center**

Learn about sugar vs. sugar substitutes.

Quick visit to the new Louisiana State Museum to see the giant Sugar Cane Harvester Exhibit. If time allows, walk to the nearby New State Capital, an Art Deco landmark, to see the bagasse ceiling, made from sugar cane byproducts.

Sugar Baron's Dinner

Depart Baton Rouge for Houmas House & Gardens, an 1840 Greek Revival plantation, arriving at 5:30 for a tour of the gorgeous gardens and dinner. Bus returns to the hotel, arriving in New Orleans about 10:30-11.

Saturday, October 10

Press Room Closed

9:30 **Urban Farming: Beyond the Backyard Garden**

Board bus to Hollygrove Market in the Carrollton-Hollygrove area. A post-Katrina neighborhood organization teamed up with the New Orleans Food and Farm Network (NOFFN) to bring fresh food and community development to their area. Now neighborhood citizens staff the market, sell organic produce, and the NOFFN "grows the growers," teaching urban organic farming to entrepreneurs to farm in the (abundant) vacant land around New Orleans to supply the many farmers markets that have sprung up. All the markets need more product. Activist, scholar and NOFFN Executive Director **Daphne Derven** leads the tour.

11 **The Southern Louisiana Thanksgiving Foods You Never Knew**

Bus leaves Hollygrove Market for New Orleans Cooking Experience at the 1790s Creole Plantation House on Bayou Road for farewell lunch. You know about fried turkey, but did you realize gumbo is served at Thanksgiving? Along with oyster dressing, mirliton casserole, and more. With cooking teachers **Chef Frank Brigtsen, Poppy Tooker and Chiqui Collier**.

12:30 Bus returns to hotel. **Official close of conference.**

What You Need to Know

Hotel

The International House, 221 Camp St., (www.ihhotel.com) is in the Central Business District, called the CBD (not downtown). Two blocks from the French Quarter, International House is a luxury boutique hotel with a new conference center in a 100-year-old building across the street. The hotel has free wireless access, waffle cloth robes, a fitness center and a candlelit bar, Loa. The restaurant, Rambla, features tapas.

Hotel Reservations

The AFJ negotiated room rate for deluxe king and queen rooms is \$149 (double or single plus 13 percent tax plus \$1 per room/night occupancy tax) are good for three days on either side of the conference. AFJ has reserved a limited number of rooms at this price, so call sooner, rather than later. Make a reservation by calling 1-800-633-5770, or email: reservations@ihhotel.com, and request reservations for the Association of Food Journalists (AFJ) Conference in October 2009. Secure and guarantee with your credit card. If you need to cancel, it is your responsibility. AFJ will adjust its hotel room block Sept. 1. If there are rooms remaining in the block at that time, they will be released.

Roommate Service

If you need a roommate in order to share hotel room costs, mark that part of the registration form. AFJ will make every effort to find a roommate.

Breakfast

The hotel will give conference participants a \$5 breakfast voucher for Luke, Chef John Besh's German-French brasserie, 333 St. Charles Ave., about four blocks from the hotel.

Ground Transportation To/From Airport

A taxicab from Louis Armstrong International Airport to the CBD costs around \$28. An Airport Shuttle service is available from the airport to the hotels in the CBD for \$15 per person, one-way. Call 1-866-596-2699 or 504-522-3500 for details or to make a reservation.

Spouse/Guest Welcome

Spouses/guests are welcome to participate in all optional activities plus the following conference events:

Wednesday, Oct. 7: Taste of New Orleans: \$85 per spouse/guest.

Thursday, Oct. 8: Restaurant August, Awards Competition 2009 Banquet: \$85 per spouse/guest.

Friday, Oct. 9: On the bus for All-Day-Sugar-Tour to Baton Rouge, includes Sharecroppers lunch and Sugar Baron's Dinner at Houmas House Plantation, \$120 per spouse/guest.

Saturday, Oct. 10: Louisiana Thanksgiving Lunch, \$75 per spouse/guest.

Writer-in-Residence

John T. Edge is *New York Times* and *Oxford American* food columnist, contributing editor to *Gourmet* magazine, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. Author of six books and cookbooks (at least) and the upcoming *Truck Food* about modern American truck and street food. Edge will conduct one-on-one writing critiques; make reservations on Registration Form.

Conference Rates & Deadlines; Refund Policy

Register until **June 30** for the AFJ Early-Bird Special of \$295 (USD); Rate goes to \$325 on **July 1**.

Hotel rooms in the AFJ conference room block will be available until **Sept. 1**; released on **Sept. 2**.

Each conference participant is responsible for AFJ and hotel cancellations.

AFJ will refund registration fee minus 20 percent if contacted by **Aug. 1**.

No refunds after **Aug. 2**.

Optional Activities

On your own dime, also great stories

Pre-conference: Tuesday night activities.

- *The Times-Picayune* restaurant critic **Brett Anderson** will take a group to Galatoire's, one of the oldest and most famous restaurants in the country. E-mail banderson@timespicayune.com to be included in group.

- More funky: **Another** group to Rock N Bowl, famous for live music, bowling, dancing, and the huge variety of people who go there. E-mail jwalker@timespicayune.com to be included in group.

Private Tours

The only way to truly understand what happened in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and why it was the greatest disaster in American history, is to see it with your own eyes. Free private disaster tours with local veteran journalists are available. The tour takes 70 to 90 minutes and goes through less-known-but-just-as-affected neighborhoods as well as the Lower Ninth Ward and the modern houses built there by Brad Pitt's Make It Right Foundation. E-mail jwalker@timespicayune.com if you want to take the tour Tuesday during the day, Wednesday morning, or Saturday afternoon.

Post-Conference

Volunteer in The Edible Schoolyard at 1:30 on Saturday, Oct. 10. Millions of Americans (and foreigners) come to New Orleans to work in the recovery. Be a part of it! Join **Dale Curry** and the rest of our conference committee to garden for a couple of hours in the second Edible Schoolyard at Samuel Green Charter School. Now 2.5 years old, the schoolyard is Alice Waters' gift to New Orleans. It proves her vision for greener, more nutritious food for children is universally achievable. Bring your gardening gloves and e-mail jwalker@timespicayune.com to participate.

Conference celebration at 5 on Saturday. Exact nature of celebration to be determined by the group. E-mail jwalker@timespicayune.com.