



The term “soul food” is used to describe African-American cuisine. The term celebrated the ingenuity and skill of cooks who were able to form a distinctive cuisine despite limited means.

The term originated in the South during the Civil Rights Movement when it was common to use the term “soul” to describe Black culture (such as “soul music” or “soul man”).

Traditional “soul food” is described as very flavorful due to the heavy use of seasonings.



In the 1600s slave ship cargoes brought crops from Africa to North America which caused these foods to remain staples of culinary Black culture. Foods native to African tribes include: okra, yams (sweet potatoes used in US), watermelon, peanuts, millet, and sorghum.



Historically, Blacks consumed a more plant-based diet due to supplementing food rations with fruits and veggies from their garden. Meat cuts were usually ones the slave owners discarded: gizzards, pigs’ feet, and chitterlings or “chitlins” which are still used in dishes today

Recipes were passed down orally, and ingredients vary due to settler influence and special ingredients privy to the region.

Low country cuisine refers to a region along South Carolina’s coast which uses ingredients like rice, crabs, oysters, shrimp, and sweet potatoes. In New Orleans, gumbo is a traditional Creole dish with okra, or quingombo, a native plant of Africa. Creole cuisine has also been influenced by the Spanish, French, Caribbean, and Native-American settlers.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

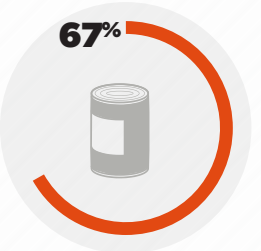
FOOD FOR THE SOUL



Soul food brings family together, and keeps the family close in a culturally comfortable setting (on Sundays after church, and on major holidays, like Thanksgiving and Christmas), whether at Mama’s house, Grandma’s house, or an aunt’s house—it’s a cherished part of the African-American culture.



African-Americans are **less likely** to say the statement “I can eat packaged foods and still feel like I’m eating a healthy diet” describes them well.



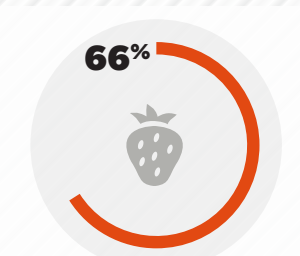
“Cooking reflects the nature of its people.”
–Jonell Nash



African-Americans **agree** with the statement “I worry less about reading labels when I’m at a ‘healthier’ grocery store like Whole Foods or a health food store.”

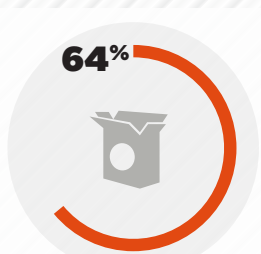


3 in 4 African-Americans are likely to say they “like to support brands that have gotten rid of many or all of the preservatives in their products,” and **1 in 3** is likely to say they “don’t have time to look at the labels of the food products they buy.”



African-Americans say they “try to eat mostly all-natural foods and beverages.”

African-Americans also report they “regularly monitor and actively avoid processed foods.”



Source: <http://libguides.sunysccc.edu/c.php?g=675338&p=435812>, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/soul-food-cuisine>

Source: C+R Research & IFT, A Clean Label Revolution, 2016

SO WHAT?

Understanding the background and roots of specific taste preferences and dining behaviors can be beneficial, especially in the CPG space. Marketers can use imagery of these social gatherings as a mirror of the culture to evoke a sense of nostalgia and comfort to draw this group of consumers in. In addition, health does not have to come at the expense of severing ties with cultural traditions.



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