



AUGUST 2026

CAJUN BLACKENING



Each month from February to November, we'll offer a free "take-and-make" spice kit highlighting a different spice, herb, or blend. Each kit includes a small portion of the featured spice, enough for the suggested recipes on the back page. Kits will be available starting the first Monday of the month at the Adult Services desk at both Harnish and Eastgate branches. Supplies are limited. Please take one kit per household. After trying the recipes, we'd love to hear from you! Share your photos, tips, or feedback at info@aapld.org.

Cajun Blackening Blend is a bold, flavorful seasoning from the culinary traditions of southern Louisiana. Cajun Blackening Blend is a versatile seasoning for fish, shrimp, chicken, steak, pork, roasted potatoes, vegetables, and even tofu. It is typically used to coat food before cooking over very high heat, creating a dark, flavorful crust. Despite its name, "blackened" does not mean burned. Instead, the spices toast and caramelize, giving the food its signature color and rich flavor. Whether cooked on the grill, in a skillet, or in the oven, this seasoning brings the bold flavors and rich culinary heritage of Louisiana to everyday meals.

Although cooks in Louisiana had long used similar seasoning techniques, Chef Paul Prudhomme popularized blackening across the United States in the early 1980s with his famous blackened redfish. Traditionally, blackened foods are cooked in a very hot cast-iron skillet with a small amount of butter or oil to help form the flavorful crust.

Most Cajun Blackening blends contain paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper, cayenne pepper, thyme, oregano, and salt. Some recipes also include white pepper, cumin, or smoked paprika. The blend offers a smoky, savory flavor with a level of heat that depends on the amount of cayenne.

Cajun cuisine reflects the history of the Cajun people, descendants of French-speaking Acadians who settled in southern Louisiana after being expelled from what is now eastern Canada in the 1700s. Their cooking blends French, Spanish, African, Native American, and Caribbean influences, creating the hearty, flavorful dishes for which the region is known.



ALLERGEN WARNING AAPLD is not responsible for any reactions or sensitivities to any spice. Please be aware that spices may contain or come into contact with common allergens like dairy, eggs, soybeans, tree nuts, peanuts, fish, shellfish, or wheat. Stay safe! Cook with caution.



BLACKENED WHITE FISH AND CHEESE GRITS

Ingredients

Instructions

FOR THE FISH

- 2 skinless white fish fillets
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 teaspoons Cajun blackening blend
- Sliced scallions and parsley, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, for serving

FOR THE CHEESE GRITS

- 3 ½ cups low-sodium chicken stock or water
- 1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1 cup quick-cooking grits
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup grated sharp Cheddar, plus more for garnish
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

- Season both sides of the fillets to completely coat. Allow the fish to sit for 15 minutes at room temperature.
- While the fish sits, make the cheese grits: Bring the chicken stock and salt to a boil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add the grits while whisking and reduce heat to maintain a simmer. Allow the grits to thicken, about 5 minutes or so, then stir in the milk, butter and cheese. Season with black pepper and more salt to taste. Keep over the lowest heat possible until ready to serve.
- Meanwhile, cook the fish: Heat a large cast-iron skillet with the olive oil and butter over medium-high heat. Add the fish fillets, and cook until the spices are darkened and aromatic, and the fish flakes easily with a fork, 2 to 4 minutes per side.
- Assemble the dish by placing the grits at the bottom of a shallow bowl. Garnish the grits with more shredded cheese and nestle the fish on top. Sprinkle scallions and parsley. Serve immediately with lemon wedges for squeezing over the fish.