

T SENIOR TIMES

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LOVE OF TRAVEL SOUTH CAROLINA'S LOWCOUNTRY DINING

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For the Love of Travel



Aaron Leventhal

Discovering South Carolina's Lowcountry Dining

West African people enslaved at plantations along South Carolina's coastal seaboard cooked meals incorporating their heritage that became known as Lowcountry cooking. According to Alphonso Brown, 76, a native Charlestonian, musician and educator, they lived on "free food" — vegetables, herbs and seafood they picked up in the wet marshes, rivers and oceans edge.

Long grain rice, okra, peas, peanuts, sweet potatoes, onions and watermelons flourished in the hot, subtropical climate, while the brackish waters yielded shrimp, crab, crayfish and oysters. Parsley, basil, thyme and black peppercorns flavored

their slow-cooked stews. When available, they added chickens and "offal" meats, such as ham hocks, pig jowls and chitlins left by the white masters who found them unfit to eat.

Through the centuries, these simple dishes were infused with Caribbean, Western European and early American influences. Today, dishes such as she-crab and sweet potato soups and Hoppin' John with rice and field peas are found on restaurant menus throughout the Charleston area.

Listed below are six well-known and popular restaurants that take pride in preparing their own interpretations of Lowcountry



Chef Amsure Royal, Nigel's Good Food

cooking enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Nigel's Good Food, Chef Amsure Royal North Charleston nigelsgoodfood.com

Opened in 2011 by Nigel and Louise Drayton, this neighborhood favorite serves up some of the region's most authentic Lowcountry dishes. They range from Bam's spicy gumbo and BBQ ribs to collard greens and okra soup. For dessert, there's Trenton's Bourbon Pecan Pie and Sydni's Peach Cobbler. "We treat everyone like family, with warm hospitality and a hot meal," says general manager Shari Mazyck.

Gillie's Seafood, Sean Mendes, Owner and Chef, James Island gilliesseafood.com

This popular restaurant features recipes from Sean's grandmother, along with Sean's own seafood creations. In addition to his Grandma's fried chicken, meatloaf and smothered turkey wings, favorites include shrimp and grits, and soul rolls, a unique concoction of collard greens, red rice, house made pimiento cheese and pulled pork.

Bowen's Island Restaurant, Chef Austin Johnson, Folly Beach bowenisland.com

Celebrating its 75th anniversary and named a *Classic American Cultural Institution* by the prestigious James Beard Institute, soon Bowen's Island Restaurant will open its new Raw Bar for lunch with offerings such as oyster po' boys, ceviche and shrimp salad.

Ellis Creek Fish Camp Chef Antonio Inzillo, James Island elliscreekfishcamp.com

At a casual, camp-like setting on Ellis Creek surrounded by beautiful marsh



Owner and chef, Sean Mendes, Gillie's Seafood

views, Johnson & Wales-educated Chef Inzillo serves up his inspired takes on fried oysters, whole flounder, shrimp and grits, fried okra, collard greens and more. Our Lab Lily enjoys the outdoor patio and the Lowcountry "doggie dinner" with turkey, sweet potatoes, oats and green beans.

82 Queen Historic Downtown Charleston 82queen.com

A pioneer in refined Lowcountry cuisine, 82 Queen has focused on fresh, local ingredients and gracious hospitality for 40 years. Its chefs take pride in offering a fusion of culturally diverse flavors served in 11 elegant dining rooms and a charming outdoor patio. Specialties include award-winning she crab soup, Lowcountry gumbo, fried green tomatoes, fried oyster salad, barbecue shrimp and grits and pecan pie.

Three Little Birds Café West Ashley, threelittlebirdscafe.com

This small, always-packed diner specializes in dozens of breakfast items and sandwiches, fresh-squeezed juices and smoothies. Lowcountry-influenced specialties include sweet potato bis-



Richard Singleton roasts oysters at Bowen's Island Restaurant

cuits, shrimp or fish 'n' grits, and the Birdhouse Burrito, with black beans, tofu, peppers, onion and sweet potatoes.

If you go: For the past four years, my wife Beth, our Lab Lily and I have escaped Columbus' harsh winter days to Folly Beach, a tranquil island oasis, 12 miles south of historic Charleston. We stay at a small, fully-furnished vacation rental a few blocks from the beach managed

by Kevin Edenborough of Seaside Property Management LLC (seasidefolly@gmail.com). It's best to book a stay during the off season between October and February when crowds and prices are down.

For more information, www.visitfolly.com

Senior Times travel columnist Aaron Leventhal is a frequent contributor to Senior Times. Pictures are by Beth Ervin Leventhal.



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MATCHING EMPLOYERS AND JOB SEEKERS

Seniors are often the 'right fit'

By Miriam Segaloff

Part-time job seekers aged 50 and over face a unique set of challenges in today's employment market.

But for some central Ohio employers, the senior worker is just the right fit. And for 50 years, MatureWorks (formerly Employment for Seniors) has been making successful matches between the two.

"We've been working with them for many, many years," said Vanessa Frazier, recruiting manager for Tristar Transportation Co. "We always find really qualified candidates through them. Their members happen to be the perfect demographic for us and a great fit for our current job openings."

Tristar is a family-run,



Julie Maurer

specialized transportation company. Frazier said the company has hired 11 drivers through MatureWorks over the last four years. The average age of drivers, she said, is 63.

MatureWorks is a volunteer-run, donation- and grant-supported non-profit organization committed to "providing advocacy, access to a diverse network and personalized employment assistance to empower mature adults to reach their desired employment potential." Originally named the Senior Citizens Placement Bureau of Franklin County, the organization was founded in



Recruiters meet with job seekers at a MatureWorks Career Expo



Matureworks offers help with resumes and interviewing skills

1972 to combat poverty and the physical and mental decline of retired individuals.

For unemployed people 50 and over, MatureWorks provides free career counseling and job search resources, help with their resume and interviewing skills and access to job leads. All services are offered for free. There is no income requirement.

Julie Maurer, president of the MatureWorks board of trustees, said the organization's clients are more diverse, more skilled and more equipped for the modern workplace than ever.

"We are seeing Baby Boomers in this cohort, but we are also seeing Gen Xers," Maurer said. "Generally speaking, those entering the 50-plus age group are very well equipped to engage with the technological advancements happening in today's workplace. We want to recognize that not all, but many, mature work-

ers don't face the same challenges mature workers have in the past."

Maurer said the organization also supports employers with workshops and help developing age-friendly policies and practices.

"I think it is those partnerships, and those relationships, with many other organizations and employers, as well as our focus on advocacy, that has kept us strong all these years," Maurer said. "It is not lost on me that 50 years later, the need that existed when it was created is still out there. And the reason we are open today is because we've been working hard to adapt to the requirements that exist in the world of work that maybe weren't there before the pandemic hit."

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, Maurer said, the organization was serving hundreds of clients a year, with the capacity to help many more.

"We did not have the

need to recruit clients or do a lot of outreach to attract clients," she said. "Then the pandemic hit and it all came to a screeching halt."

Things started to rebound in 2021, Maurer said. "But with the Great Resignation we have seen the numbers decrease. But, we are here and we are ready. Employers still are needing a lot of people to come in and fill jobs. It's a win-win for everybody when we do that."

MatureWorks is launching a new website, www.matureworks.org, this month to reflect the organization's name change. Maurer said the change was two years in the making.

"It represents the strategic input we've gotten from our stakeholders over the years," she said. "The term 'senior' sometimes denotes a different image of aging than today's seniors embrace. We wanted to better align the name with the changing nature of seniors in the workforce."

"They are a vibrant part of the workforce," Maurer continued. "It represents the people we serve more accurately, in terms of mature workers. Employment for seniors was just not quite aligned with the image of today's mature workers."

One of those workers is Fred Poling, 72, a driver for Tristar who retired from a career in retail and banking about two years ago.

"A lot of the jobs are part time so you can still get out

See **JOBS**, page 10