



MEET JOHN BESH

John Besh is a chef and a native son dedicated to the culinary riches of southern Louisiana. In his restaurants, entrepreneurial pursuits, and public activities, he preserves and promotes ingredients, techniques, and heritage one dish at a time.

Besh grew up in southern Louisiana and has set the benchmark for fine dining in New Orleans – a town whose identity is bound to its food. Each of his six acclaimed restaurants (August, Besh Steak, Lüke, La Provence, American Sector, and Domenica) celebrates the bounty and traditions of the region.

From the outset of his career, Besh's talent and drive have earned him continuous kudos: *Food & Wine* named him one of the "Top 10 Best New Chefs in America" and his flagship restaurant August has been featured on the late great *Gourmet* magazine's "Guide to America's Best Restaurants," and "America's Top 50 Restaurants."

Local publications keeping close tabs on the dining scene, like *The Times-Picayune* and *New Orleans City Business*, have applauded all his other restaurants as they've appeared and won the hearts and palates of discriminating diners. He won the James Beard Award for Best Chef of the Southeast in 2006, and was awarded Food Arts' Silver Spoon Award in 2009 for revitalizing the culinary legacy of New Orleans. John Besh is a frequent guest chef on the *NBC Today Show*, and has appeared on top programs on The Food Network and the Sundance Channel.

Besh's devotion to local ingredients and local cuisine also extends to his entrepreneurial projects, including the creation of Besh Restaurant Group Catering; the launch of a line of gourmet products; and the publication of his first cookbook, *My New Orleans*, which won a 2010 IACP Best American Cookbook award.

A former U.S. Marine, Besh is proud to have partnered with Baton Rouge-based emergency reconstruction specialists Arkel International, for which he creates high quality ready-to-eat meals for distribution to thousands of emergency response teams and sustained strategic operations in the U.S. and around the world; the novel initiative promotes the Gulf Coast's food culture as it elevates the Louisiana economy. In recognition of such far-reaching contributions, the Louisiana Restaurant Association named him Restaurateur of the Year in 2008.

As the father of four boys – Brendan, Jack, Luke and Andrew – Besh takes breaks from his busy schedule to continue a longstanding family tradition: fishing. Besh says he wants his sons to understand the origin of local foods and food preparation. "My sons think I'm crazy," he says, laughing, "because I want them to learn to make the perfect roux and gumbo."