

Cajun food and music

In this recording you will hear two people, Clothilde and Carla, talking about Cajun food and music. Cajun people were originally French people who lived in today's Canadian provinces Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and moved to Louisiana after 1755. Clothilde, who is Cajun tells Carla in this conversation about Cajun food and music.

Carla: So Cajun people live in the southern part of Louisiana and the area is called Cajun Country. How is it different from the rest of Louisiana and the southern part of the United States?

Clothilde: Perhaps you've heard of Cajun food or Cajun music.

Carla: I did some googling before our interview, and I saw pictures of Cajun spices when I googled Cajun.

Clothilde: What is your favorite food? Is it tacos or pizza? I mean, I love tacos and pizza, but I really love crawfish etouffee and chicken and sausage gumbo. I also love crawfish boils. Cajun food is delicious and if you ever find a Cajun restaurant in Norway, go to it and try some of our food. Also, I have to say, I enjoy Cajun music and when I'm back home in south Louisiana I go dancing. We dance the two-step which is a Cajun way of dancing. The music is mostly in French, and the rhythm is exciting and electric. One of my favorite Cajun bands is called Beausoleil, which means beautiful sun.

Carla: That is a very nice name.

Clothilde: It's beautiful, ha?

Carla: Yeah, really. You have just mentioned some Cajun dishes and by the way, they sound delicious – crawfish etouffee, chicken and sausage gumbo and crawfish boils. What is crawfish? It is not really a fish, is it? And what is a gumbo?

Clothilde: Oh, I love crawfish. You know, people from the north might call it crayfish, mudbugs, or crawdads – but we in south Louisiana only call it crawfish. They look like small lobsters, really small lobsters, and live in fresh water.

Carla: What are the typical ingredients in Cajun food? Is the food very spicy?

Clothilde: Usually the food is spicy with black pepper, white pepper, and red pepper. And many Cajuns like Tabasco Sauce which comes from south Louisiana, from an island called Avery Island.

Carla: Cool! I think Tabasco is world known, most people will know ...

Clothilde: Yes, and it's made only on that island.

Carla: You also talked about Cajun music. I understand that the text is in French, because Cajun people have a French heritage. Are there different rhythms? What kind of music is it? You know sometimes you can describe traditional or typical music by the rhythms or instruments. Scottish music very often seems sad and uses pipes and Irish music often uses the violin or flute, and it invites to dance. How would you describe Cajun music?

Clothilde: Ok, it's very simple. Cajun music is recognized by three key elements: you have to have the accordion, the fiddle, and the French language. Most Cajun songs are either two-steps, it's called Chanky Chank or waltzes, you know one-two-three.

Carla: I understand, so it's two different rhythms. This is really cool.