

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Arnaud's - New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Arnaud's restaurant located in the heart of the **French Quarter** of **New Orleans, Louisiana** has been a fine dining tradition since 1918, and has excellent Creole food, old-world elegance, charm, ambience, and impeccable service by tuxedoed waiters who add to the family-owned restaurant's mystique. The talented **Chef de Cuisine Tommy Digiovanni** focuses on classic **French** and innovative **Creole** dishes.

The restaurant ambience is old New Orleans as good as it gets, with sparkling crystal chandeliers and ceiling fans, tiny octagonal shaped black and white tiles on the floor, dark wood paneled wainscoting on the walls, and an extensive collection of celebrity and VIP photos grace the top portion of the walls. Potted palms on tall pedestals add to the overall style in the main dining room. Tables are dressed with pristine white linens, silver candlesticks with amber beaded shades, and pink carnations in low vases. Private dining rooms recall another era with their high ceilings with wide crown molding, chandeliers, fireplaces, and stunning individual décor.

We began our evening with French 75 cocktails, which is also the name of their bar, the **French 75**. For those not familiar with the Arnaud's French 75, Bartender Chris Hannah mixes a delicious combination of 1 ounce cognac, ¼ ounce lemon juice, and ¼ ounce simple syrup, shaken with ice, strained into a champagne flute, topped with 2 ounces of very cold champagne, and garnished with a lemon twist garnish. Perfect!



Chef de Cuisine Tommy Digiovanni

Augie, our captain, brought us a large plate of their Soufflé Potatoes with a Béarnaise Sauce to enjoy with our cocktails. According to the Arnaud's menu, "Legend has it that Collinet, French King Louis Philippe's (reign 1830 - 1848) Chef unintentionally created soufflé potatoes by plunging already fried potatoes into extremely hot oil to reheat them when the King arrived late for dinner one night. To the Chef's surprise and the King's delight, the potatoes puffed up like little balloons." One bite of these crisp and golden delicacies and we were instantly smitten, and the salt on the potatoes was a nice complement to the French 75 cocktail.

Arnaud's is famous for its classic recipes and high-level of consistency year-after-year. Edward began his Arnaud's experience with an order of Oysters Arnaud, which was a dream for oyster lovers offering one baked oyster prepared in each of their five styles. Oysters Bienville, an Arnaud's original was a luscious combination of shrimp, mushrooms, green onions, herbs and seasonings in a white wine sauce. Oysters Kathryn was prepared with artichoke hearts, garlic, fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano and extra virgin olive oil.

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Oysters Suzette featured bacon, pimento, green onion and bell pepper. Oysters Ohan, highlighted Creole cooking with eggplant and Andouille sausage, and Arnaud's version of Oysters Rockefeller made with fresh spinach and bacon with a touch of Pernod.



Oysters Arnaud

I began with their signature appetizer, Shrimp Arnaud, which were gulf shrimp marinated in their famous tangy Creole Remoulade Sauce on a bed of shredded lettuce, with tomato slices and an olive.



Shrimp Arnaud

We continued with steaming bowls of soup, for Edward there was a lovely Turtle Soup with Sherry, and for me, there was Seafood Gumbo. Delicious and rich, both of the soups had a nice level of spice without being overwhelming.



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Seafood Gumbo

Turtle Soup

As Edward could not decide between the Breast of Duck Ellen and the Roast Louisiana Quail Elzey for his main course, Augie suggested that he order a half-portion of each, indulging in decadence, without overindulging in calories, and the combination was perfect.



Breast of Duck Ellen and Roast Louisiana Quail Elzey

Chef Tommy Digiovanni presented the Breast of Duck Ellen in a blueberry-infused Port Wine Sauce with marinated blueberries, and the Roast Louisiana Quail Elzey was partially deboned, filled with foie gras mousse and mushroom duxelle, wrapped with country-smoked bacon, and served on a bed of truffle-infused Bordelaise Sauce.

For my main course, I had the Arnaud's Crab Cakes made with jumbo lump Louisiana crabmeat served with a White Remoulade Sauce, with arrived as two large crab cakes made with succulently sweet crabmeat, drizzled with the sauce and sprinkled with capers, and garnished with spinach leaves. To accompany our main courses, Edward and I shared a side order of their creamed spinach.



Arnaud's Crab Cakes

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Portions are ample, and by the time that the dessert menu arrived we were more than satisfied, but could not resist sharing an order of their Praline Crêpes, which were delicate crêpes filled with praline infused cream cheese, and served with roasted pecans and caramel sauce.



Praline Crêpes

After dinner, we visited their Germaine Cazenave Wells Mardi Gras Museum, which opened in 1983. Mrs. Wells was the successor and daughter of Count Arnaud, and she reigned as "Queen" of more than 22 Mardi Gras Balls from 1937 until 1968, which is more than any other woman in the history of Carnival (Mardi Gras).



Germaine Cazenave Wells Mardi Gras Museum

The museum features over 2 dozen lavish Mardi Gras costumes, including 13 of Mrs. Wells "Queen" costumes, Count Arnaud's King costumes, children's costumes, and over 70 vintage photographs, faux jewels, invitations, souvenirs, and provides an insider's look at the elaborate world of Mardi Gras in New Orleans. We have eaten at the restaurant many times over the years, and visiting the museum is always a highlight.

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Brunch with Dixieland Jazz

Arnaud's is open for dinner nightly from Sunday through Thursday from 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm. They have extended hours until 10:30 pm on Friday and Saturday. On Sunday there is a four-course "prix fixe" Brunch with Dixieland Jazz from 10:00 am until 2:30 pm. Jackets are suggested for gentlemen.



Arnaud's

Read about **Arnaud's** in the **Chef's Recipe** section where **Chef Tommy Digiovanni** graciously shares a delicious taste of the restaurant with his recipes for **Oysters Arnaud**, **Duck Ellen in Blueberry Sauce**, **Pompano Duarte**, and **Trout Amandine**.



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For information on **Tales of the Cocktail**, please visit: www.TalesoftheCocktail.com.

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