



The People's Place: Soul Food Restaurants and Reminiscences from the Civil Rights Era to Today

Dave Hoekstra

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. loved the fried catfish and lemon icebox pie at Memphis's Four Way restaurant. Beloved nonagenarian chef Leah Chase introduced George W. Bush to baked cheese grits and scolded Barack Obama for putting Tabasco sauce on her gumbo at New Orleans's Dooky Chase's. When SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael asked Ben's Chili Bowl owners Ben and Virginia Ali to keep the restaurant open during the 1968 Washington, DC, riots, they obliged, feeding police, firefighters, and student activists as they worked together to quell the violence.

Celebrated former *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Dave Hoekstra unearths these stories and hundreds more as he travels, tastes, and talks his way through twenty of America's best, liveliest, and most historically significant soul food restaurants. Following the "soul food corridor" from the South through northern industrial cities, *The People's Place* gives voice to the remarkable chefs, workers, and small business owners (often women) who provided sustenance and a safe haven for civil rights pioneers, not to mention presidents and politicians; music, film, and sports legends; and countless everyday, working-class people.

Featuring lush photos, mouth-watering recipes, and ruminations from notable regulars such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson, jazz legend Ramsey Lewis, Little Rock Nine member Minnijean Brown, and many others, *The People's Place* is an unprecedented celebration of soul food, community, and oral history.

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