

Cooking in the Sinai with the North Carolina National Guard

C Battery 5th of the 113th Field Artillery Battalion

Greensboro, NC

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It's been a hectic summer in the south of Sinai. Amid the taunting warm waters of the Red Sea to the east of our location and the political unrest in Egypt to our west, the one thing that gets the North Carolina National Guard soldiers through the day is, "what's for dinner?"

We received a case of Lucky 32's Voodoo Sauce from Chef Jay Pierce (thank you very much Chef!) and have been enjoying a taste of home from North Carolina out here in the South Sinai, Egypt. During our yearlong deployment here in support of the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO), twelve countries operate approximately 20 outposts throughout the Sinai, Egyptian border to observe and report violations of the Peace Treaty Accords signed in 1979 between Egypt and Israel.

While posted at these outposts the soldiers rely on the skills they brought with them to cook, clean, repair, and operate their remote sites for weeks at a time. When stationed at an outpost with the same group of guys working 24 hours 7 days a week, meals tend to be the morale booster for each day. The challenge is when faced with limited supplies, seasonings, and food staples, how do you make each meal unique and different from the last? Sergeant Rusty Lee of Greensboro (a culinary chef in his civilian life) had to come up with unique yet simple ways to help bring life to our meals. A favorite of the 21-man team at his outpost is tacos, but they always seemed to lack flavor due to limited spices available; however, one jar of Voodoo made all the difference.

"With Voodoo's unique flavor and seasoning I was able to bring life to the dish and make it taste as vibrant as it looked," stated Sergeant Lee, "it turned out so well that I will use it again when I get home!"

After browning the meat and draining the liquid he adds Voodoo Sauce, tomato paste, paprika, fresh garlic, and cumin. Specialist Davila, a culinary graduate of Johnson and Whales and chef of Circa 81 located in Morehead, North Carolina, served as the cook as well when not assigned to other duties. "I first used Voodoo Sauce to bring flavor to grilled ribs and pulled pork but I have discovered that this sauce can be used for many other dishes. The most surprising result was the flavor it brought to meat loaf."



Below is a recipe by Sergeant Lee for Marinated Grilled Sirloin (another tasty unit favorite):

- 2 cups voodoo sauce
- 3 cloves fresh garlic: finely chopped
- ½ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tbsp. onion powder
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 cup tomato paste
- 2 cups apple nectar
- 1 tsp. salt and black pepper
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup vegetable oil



Mix all ingredients in a saucepan and heat until sugar is melted. Reduce heat and let stand to room temp. Coat well both sides of 4-6 Sirloins approximately 1-2 pounds each – remember we’re cooking for 20+ hungry soldiers here. Cover meat with plastic wrap and let stand for 1 hour. Then cook the meat either on the grill or searing in skillet before finishing in the oven. Always let the meat rest for a few minutes after cooking before serving.

Thank you Lucky 32 for supporting our unit over here in the Sinai and sending us some Voodoo sauce as a very much appreciated (and tasty favorite) flavor from home. Looking forward to attending Chef Jay’s next beer dinner once we are back stateside.

SSG Khan Eakin
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