

## Chef from the Hood Recipes



**Chef:**  
Mark Porretta

**Restaurant:**  
Mojo Café

**Recipe:**  
Mojo Meatloaf!

**To make the meatloaf:**

Quickly toast 1/2 cup of pine nuts (pignola) in a cast iron skillet until golden. Place cooled nuts in a food processor with 1 cup (or more\*) of Panko crumbs. Process crumbs and nuts until finely ground (they will fly up to the sides of processor bowl).

**Next, place the crumb and nut mixture in a large bowl and add:**

2 pounds of lean ground beef  
1 medium-sized, finely diced yellow onion  
1 tablespoon of finely diced fresh garlic  
1 stemmed, seeded and finely diced jalapeño pepper  
A large pinch each of oregano & thyme  
salt & fresh cracked pepper to taste  
2 large, local eggs  
1/2 cup of catsup  
2 tablespoons hot red chili sauce (Mark prefers Sriracha brand in a clear bottle labeled with a red rooster and topped with a green cap.)

Mix all the ingredients together with your hands. If too wet, add a bit more Panko. Shape into a loaf, place in an oiled loaf pan, pour glaze over top and bake in a preheated 375° oven for 1 hour.

**To make the meatloaf glaze:** In a small bowl mix together 1 cup of dark brown sugar; 1/2 cup of catsup and 2 good pinches of Cajun or Creole spice mix (like Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning). Pour on top of meatloaf before baking.

Mojo Cafe's Chef Mark Porretta thought twice about divulging his recipe for this meatloaf. "People ask how we make the meatloaf all the time! At the Mojo we serve it with a roasted shallot and port wine demi-glaze with sides of roasted garlic mashed potatoes and corn maque choux (a Creole style creamed corn with roasted red peppers). I've been working on this one for years; and now at Mojo it's one of our most popular entrees. It's pretty damn good." After mixing all the ingredients together, Mark likes to break off a small portion and shape it into a patty which he fries and tastes before baking the whole loaf. "That way I can add a bit more of this or that if it needs anything else." The sign in front of Mojo Cafe says, "Food like your Grandmother would cook. If she only knew how!" This not quite traditional, yet altogether extraordinary meatloaf illustrates that point perfectly. One meatloaf makes 6 to 8 servings.