

Uncle Bob's Estate

A telegram is delivered to your door. It says that your Uncle Bob, founder of “Uncle Bob’s Fried Okra Palace” passed away yesterday. It continues with the time and location for the reading of the will, later today, and invites you to attend. You know that his vast chain of fast food restaurants is worth tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars, so you brush off your most dignified outfit and get ready.

Uncle Bob was a strange man. Besides having his name officially changed to “Uncle Bob” you know that he loved puzzles of all sorts. You recall that he was a regular member of a web discussion board called “The Grey Labyrinth,” which is devoted to puzzles and brain-wrenching games. He tried to get you interested, but the place was full of nerds and geeks, not your type at all, so you returned to DumbJocks.com, where you feel more comfortable.

Uncle Bob was a great cook, a master chef. When he founded his first Fried Okra Palace, no one thought it could possibly succeed. But not only did that restaurant make a fortune, he eventually opened forty or fifty more just like it. He always said that the secret was in the dessert. “Everyone likes an unexpected finish, an extra twist at the end,” he once told you.

When you arrive at the offices of his legal firm, Dewey, Cheetham, and Howe, you see that all your cousins are present. Obviously they all are hoping to pick up a piece of the estate. Everyone present receives a piece of parchment on a scroll, which turns out to be a copy of the will itself. Each person also receives a small recipe booklet and a couple of Xeroxed pages from a notebook. Finally, you and each of your cousins receive a sheet of paper with space for signatures and notarization, and the following contents.

The Secret Ingredient is _____ .

Last Will and Testament

I, Uncle Bob, being of sound mind and body, do hereby declare that I shall leave my entire estate, including full ownership of the entire chain of “Uncle Bob’s Fried Okra Palace” restaurants, to the first of my nieces or nephews with the culinary talent to answer the following simple question.

What herb is the secret ingredient for the famous Fried Okra?

The first member of the youngest generation to deliver the name of this ingredient to James Howe, my legal representative, will take possession immediately. Each applicant may make only one submission, and will receive nothing if it is incorrect, so be quite sure of your answer before submitting it.

The correct answer can only be discovered by successfully completing all of the recipes in the enclosed booklet and properly interpreting the results. Only someone with both the culinary knowledge and the ability to follow my instructions to the letter will be able to complete all three recipes.

Ingredients and Equipment

1. _____ Herb from the Mediterranean with a licorice flavor. (5)
2. _____ A notoriously poisonous metalloid, it has been called the Poison of Kings and the King of Poisons. (7)
3. _____ Fruit of one of the Vaccinium plants, comes in lowbush and highbush varieties. (11)
4. _____ Alcoholic ingredient of a Mint Julep. (7)
5. _____ Related to the cauliflower, this European plant can be boiled, steamed, or served raw as crudités. (8)
6. _____ A spice obtained from the inner bark of some Evergreen trees. (8)
7. _____ Dried seeds from the same plant that produces cilantro (or Chinese parsley). (9)
8. _____ A grass domesticated by indigenous peoples in Mesoamerica in prehistoric times. Its kernels can be dried and ground into flour, or (from some sub-species of the plant) cooked and eaten. (4)
9. _____ Any chemical compound that contains a carbon atom triple-bonded to a nitrogen atom. Extremely toxic!! (7)
10. _____ Perennial herb which originated in Eastern Europe. Scientific name is Anethum graveolens. (4)
11. _____ Highly aromatic and flavorful herb. Its seeds, leaves, and leaf base (which forms a bulb-like structure) are all used, and have a flavor that is similar to #1. (6)
12. _____ Generic term for aquatic vertebrates that are covered with scales, and equipped with fins. (4)
13. _____ Chinese blend that encompasses all five flavors of sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, and salty. The most common is bajiao, cloves, cinnamon, huajiao, and ground fennel seeds. (4-5, 6)
14. _____ A member of the onion family, it is sometimes called the "stinking rose." (6)
15. _____ A high-energy food made from nectar by insects. (5)
16. _____ The center of home cooking areas, sometimes equipped with a garbage disposal. (7, 4)
17. _____ Citrus fruit native to Asia. (5)
18. _____ The protein in foie gras. (5)
19. _____ Cured salmon fillet, often eaten at breakfast. (3)
20. _____ Generic term for a family of herbs that includes rosemary, sage, savory, marjoram, thyme, lavender, and others. (4)
21. _____ Its small round seeds can be ground and used as a spice. The spice is often prepared into a paste as a condiment which goes by the same name. (7)

22. _____ Term for margarine, from the French for "oil." (4)
23. _____ Common word for plants of genus *Capsicum*. Many are prized for their high levels of capsaicin. (6)
24. _____ Meat from a pig. (4)
25. _____ Common term for a starchy, tuberous crop. It originated in the area of southern Peru, but is now grown worldwide. (6)
26. _____ Root vegetable that was domesticated in Europe in pre-Roman times. It is usually used raw in salads. (6)
27. _____ Expensive spice which comes from a crocus. It imparts a very yellow color to the dish. (7)
28. _____ Personal utensil, it should be at the extreme left in a place setting because it is usually used in the first course. (5, 4)
29. _____ The most universal seasoning, it is also used as a preservative. (4)
30. _____ Metal container with a long handle, used on the stove to make Hollandaise, for instance. (8, often written as 5, 3)
31. _____ The animal which is made into calamari. (5)
32. _____ Device used to caramelize the outside of a slice of bread. (7)
33. _____ Savory edible fruit, typically red when ripe. It originated in South America but is now grown worldwide. (6)
34. _____ Mélange of nuts, dried fruits, and candy prized by hikers for its high ratio of energy to weight. (5, 3)
35. _____ Japanese word for freshwater eel. (5)
36. _____ Japanese type of horseradish, a green powder often made into a paste. (6)

Basic Side Dish

1. Mix _____₂₅_____, _____₅_____, and _____₈_____.
2. Reduce.
3. Squeeze in a teaspoon of _____₁₇_____.
4. Remove any heads of _____₂₆_____.
5. Fold in a _____₁₂_____.
6. Replace a tablespoon of _____₂₀_____ with a teaspoon of _____₁₅_____.
7. From the left, replace the first dash of _____₁₄_____ with a pinch of
_____₁₄_____.
8. Replace a teaspoon of _____₇_____ with a pinch of _____₃₆_____.
9. Put entire recipe through strainer.
10. Add a pinch of _____₁_____.
11. Simmer 8 minutes, stirring constantly.

Seafood Challenge

1. Start with one cup of _____₁₉_____.
2. And add a dash more.
3. Add a pinch of _____₁₀_____.
4. Trim away any _____₁₈_____.
5. Fold in a pinch of _____₂₇_____.
6. Blend in _____₃₁_____.
7. Snip out the head and the tail of _____₃₅_____.
8. Fold in a jigger of _____₄_____.
9. Include fries and a coke, as if you worked at McDonald's.
10. Simmer 16 minutes, stirring a bit less than one-third the time.

Everything But the ... Oh, That Too.

1. Place a _____₃₂_____, a _____₂₈_____, and the _____₁₆_____ in the middle of a _____₃₀_____.
2. Find the flower (whose name means 'star'), replace it with a teaspoon of _____₃_____. Stir 3 minutes.
3. Sift entire recipe.
4. Find the beverage. Replace it with a tablespoon of _____₁₁_____.
5. In a separate container, mix a _____₂₅_____ and a _____₃₃_____. Grate twice and mix with twice-grated _____₂₃_____. Grate again. Mix with half cup of _____₃₄_____. Grate yet again, and then add to recipe.
6. A positive attitude is critical to success as a chef. There is a bad "thought" in there, at the end. Get rid of it!
7. Yikes! Poisoned! Remove any dashes of _____₉_____.
8. Add an entire cup of _____₂₂_____.
9. Take out the pinch of _____₂₁_____ and move the dash of _____₆_____ into its place.
10. Replace a pinch of _____₁₃_____ with a pinch of _____₂₉_____.
11. Yikes! Poisoned again! Remove any pinches of _____₂_____.
12. Show Congress how it's done. Trim away all _____₂₄_____.

**A pinch of salt, a dash of lemon, and a
teaspoon of water = SNWA**

**Flour, sifted, a tablespoon of vinegar, and
3/4 cup of marjoram = FORARMARJOR**

**Parsley with oregano blended in =
POARRESGLAENYO**

**Buffalo meat, trim away fat, stir 2 minutes
= MEBULO**

**Chicken soup, simmer for 3 minutes,
stirring constantly (that is, for the full 3
minutes) = RXSFKLFNHQV**

**Mix carrot, peas, and asparagus =
CPAAESRAPRSAORTAGUS**

Reduce carob cake batter = CAROAKETTER

**Sift Parmesan cheese, then follow with a
jigger of vodka = PREACESDKA**

**Unbleached white flour, sifted twice =
UEEIL**

**Broccoli, iceberg lettuce, and cheese,
grated, then sifted = BOLEEGECCS**

**Grate cabbage, add a tablespoon of
mayonnaise = SECAAGE**

**Put coffee in the center of lobster pot,
reduce = LOBCOFFEERT**

**Stir fish stock for 7 minutes, add butter,
reduce = BTEHOCKFI**

**Mix broccoli and peas, chop 1/3, simmer 1
minute = PBDTDPMJ**

**Sift baking soda, add cream, stir for 2
minutes, then fold in 2/3 cup of batter =
SDCREBATTAMBKN**

**Start with avocado, blend in lemon juice,
strain = LVMCNDJC**

**Start with chicken broth, replace pinch of
coriander with teaspoon of salt, remove tail
of fish = SAISAKENBROT**

**Simmer borscht for 1 minute, squeeze in
strained peas = PSSTDIU**

**Fold batter into egg white, then grate =
EWBAERHITE**