

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# A taste of black history, delivered to your door

*This is the final installment of a three-part series. This week, we focus on mail-order sources for African-American foods. For Parts 1 and 2, go to [chicagotribune.com/blackhistory](http://chicagotribune.com/blackhistory).*

**By Nancie McDermott**  
Special to the Tribune

Dig into the delicious bounty of the African-American kitchen by ordering a feast to enjoy at home. The following vendors can provide extraordinary treats, from Oshi's Finest Gumbo and Glory Foods' collard greens to Geehee Sweets' Golden Scuppernong Jelly and Mama Dip's pecan pie.

Also look for African-American products featured at Jewel Food Stores during Black History Month.

■ ComfortCake Co., 866-264-2253 or [comfortcake.com](http://comfortcake.com).

Chicagoan Amy Hilliard sells moist and delicious Southern-style poundcakes from recipes she developed. Hilliard says she drew her inspiration from her grandfather, James M. Hilliard Sr., an executive chef from Ft. Smith, Ark. Flavors include lemon, almond, vanilla, chocolate chip and, for those on restricted diets, sugarless lemon. The cakes are sold in area supermarkets, often by the slice, and also can be ordered online.

■ Geehee Sweets, 912-485-2206 or [geeheesweets.com](http://geeheesweets.com)

An array of jellies, including Golden scuppernong jelly, sassafras jelly and low-sugar jellies, as well as traditional Sea Island sweetgrass baskets, handmade dolls and two fine books written by proprietor Cornelia Walker Bailey, from the company in Sapelo Island, Ga.

■ Glory Foods, 614-252-2042 or [gloryfoods.com](http://gloryfoods.com)

Glory Foods, based in Columbus, Ohio, offers Southern-style canned, frozen and fresh products in supermarkets across the country. Many of their signature items are on their Web site, too, including black-eyed peas and rice, New Orleans-style red beans, turnip greens with diced turnips and home-style corn bread mix. Gift baskets, recipes and a directory of stores also are online.

■ Grandma Maud's Down Home Cookin', 773-493-5353 or [grandmamauds.com](http://grandmamauds.com)

Paul Fregia was inspired to build his Chicago-based business by the love his Grandma Maud served, as well as by her wonderful cooking. The line includes bean and rice mixes and seasonings for vegetables, dressing and desserts, and is sold in many area supermarkets. Items also can be ordered online. Fregia won a 2005 Good Eating Award.

■ Lillie's of Charleston, 843-402-9787 or [lilliesofcharleston.com](http://lilliesofcharleston.com)



Amy Hilliard's ComfortCake Co. sells a variety of Southern-style poundcakes from recipes that she developed.

This Charleston, S.C.-based family business is named in honor of Great Aunt Lillie, who bequeathed to her family a tradition of cooking. The company offers tasty hot sauces, barbecue sauces and seasoning mixes, individually as well as in gift baskets.

■ Mama Dip's Kitchen, 919-942-5837

Author of two best-selling cookbooks, Mildred Council—

known nationwide as Mama Dip—makes a fabulous pecan pie, which can be ordered by phone from her restaurant in Chapel Hill, N.C. The pies are baked and shipped on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays via second-day air (\$14 plus shipping).

■ Ron's Gullahlicious Cakes, 843-812-2484 or [gullahgullah.com](http://gullahgullah.com)

Ron Daise, star of the children's television program, "Gullah Gullah Island," has been cooking since his childhood on St. Helena Island, S.C. His mom taught him to bake scrumptious Low Country sweets; choose from his three flavors of poundcake: Family Favorite, cream cheese and chocolate chip (\$25 each plus shipping).

■ Southern Lo Country Gullah Food, 877-838-3508 or [gullahfood.com](http://gullahfood.com)

Enjoy Oshi's Finest Gumbo, fish chowder, crab soup and collard greens, made without preservatives and with all-natural ingredients. Products are shipped overnight from South Carolina. They also carry Bill's BBQ Sauce and Gullah rubs for seafood, meat and poultry.

## Strawberry jelly cake

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 50 minutes

Yield: 10 servings

■ Jelly cakes were a standard layer cake from the mid-19th Century into the early 20th Century, when more elaborate icings and frostings moved to center stage. This cake, adapted from "From the Soul of Southern Cooking," by Kathy Starr, makes a glorious, dense cake, with a lovely icing ready in 5 minutes. For two layers, you will need cake pans that are 2 to 3 inches deep; or make it in three regular 9-inch pans.

- 2½ cups sugar
- 2 sticks (1 cup) plus 1 teaspoon butter, softened
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 3½ cups sifted cake flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda

**Jelly icing:**

- 1 cup each: confectioners' sugar, strawberry jelly

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Beat the sugar, butter and oil with a mixer on medium speed until creamy, about 3 minutes. Beat in eggs, one at a time, beating 30 seconds after each addition.

2. Reduce mixer speed to medium-low. Beat in 2½ cups of the flour and the salt, alternating with the milk, beating just until mixed; gradually add the remaining ½ cup of the flour, baking powder and baking soda, beating just until mixed. Pour batter into two greased and floured deep 9-inch cake pans.

3. Bake until an inserted tester comes out clean, about 50 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes; remove cake from pans and transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

4. For icing, combine confectioners' sugar and jelly in a bowl with a fork until smooth. Spread mixture thickly on bottom cake layer. Top with second layer. Ice the top. (Do not ice the sides of the cake.)

**Nutrition information per serving:**

753 calories, 38% of calories from fat, 32 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, 136 mg cholesterol, 112 g carbohydrates, 6 g protein, 494 mg sodium, 0.5 g fiber

