

# JAMBALAYA GIRL

by nora mcgunnigle

IN FEBRUARY 2010, during what Kristen “Jambalaya Girl” Preau Moore calls her “magic month,” her company Cook Me Somethin’ Mister launched and her beloved New Orleans Saints won their first Super Bowl.

Kristen’s packaged jambalaya rice mix was selling well, due to its authentic flavors—the spices are sourced from Paul Prudhomme’s Magic Seasoning Company, which is also the company’s packaging partner—and the flat-out hustle of Kristen and her family.

“We’ve served hundreds of thousands of samples over the years,” Kristen says, including at local festivals, Saints tailgates, and grocery stores.

But her product didn’t reach its full potential until she changed the name of the company.

“Outside of New Orleans, [customers] couldn’t remember the name Cook Me Somethin’ Mister,” she says. “People were literally calling it ‘that jambalaya with the girl with the fork earrings.’”

When the New Orleans native had the opportunity to work on her marketing plan with professionals from Goldman Sachs and Bloomberg, she was immediately asked, “Why isn’t your business name Jambalaya Girl?” Since changing her name and branding in 2016, the company’s annual gross income has increased by 250 percent through contracts with large grocery chains like Publix, Costco, and Sam’s Club.



“It’s my likeness, it’s my nickname, and it all ties together with my love for New Orleans,” Kristen says. “Then there’s the stuff you don’t even think about, like [the fact that] Cook Me Somethin’ Mister is way too long for a shelf label. So, it’s cute, people remember it, and it embodies what I’m about, and it tells a story.”

She notes that while people often automatically assume that any food coming from New Orleans is spicy, her mix has a more balanced flavor and has even been proclaimed as “kid-friendly” by the mommy blogosphere. The mix is also vegetarian-friendly, using a dried vegan beef-flavored stock to season the rice.

“It’s all about getting the best, well-rounded flavor,” Kristen says. “If you get too much heat, you burn your mouth and you don’t enjoy it.”

Fueled by the success of the flagship product, Jambalaya Girl has released other boxed mixes: a gumbo mix with a dry, toasted roux; a low-sodium brown rice mix created through partnerships with public schools; and a yellow rice mix with the addition of turmeric and saffron, which Kristen says is “just delicious New Orleans flavor blended into a classic dish.”

She says there are several New Orleans restaurants that use her jambalaya box mix as the base for dishes they serve, but only two can be publicly identified: Parkway Bakery & Tavern and Ye Olde College Inn, both local institutions. For the other users, one can only speculate.



## WHERE TO FIND IT

### IN STORES

Rouses  
Publix  
Winn-Dixie

### ONLINE

[jambalayagirl.com](http://jambalayagirl.com)



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