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# Hash

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**Hash.** Hearty meals have been cooked in large, cast-iron pots since the Middle Ages. Variations are endless and limited only to the imagination of the maker and palate of the consumer. In South Carolina, hash takes the place of honor held by Brunswick Stew in nearby Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina. Usually served over rice, hash is more than a mere accompaniment to barbecue and maintains an important role as a congregational food. Hash is a community-based tradition, cooked in big pots for large numbers of people. Recipes are far from consistent, with variations built around techniques that spring from rural folklife.

As did other southern stews, hash developed out of a need to turn leftovers, scraps, and whatever one could find into a palatable one-pot dish. While hash variations are countless, three loosely defined geographic regions can be identified. Lowcountry hash can consist of hogsheads and organ meats such as pork liver, cooked down in a stock favoring vinegar and ketchup. Vegetables can include onions, corn, and diced potatoes. Hash from the Midlands typically consists of leaner pork cuts combined with onions, cooked

in a mustard-based stock. Finally, upstate hash is largely beef-based with onions, butter, and no dominant ketchup, vinegar, or mustard base. These regions are largely historical and today the most enduring regional difference rests in the sauce or stock.

Recipes perpetuated by hash masters are a source of immense personal and local pride and makers go to great lengths to retain the uniqueness of their hash recipes and cooking techniques. While many rural fire departments, agricultural clubs, and other civic organizations cook hash for community fund-raisers, the most prolific producers are locally owned barbecue restaurants, many of which developed from family "shade tree" cooking traditions. While hash might have been born out of necessity, this one-pot treasure has long since made the transition to a "comfort food." SADDLER TAYLOR

*Carolina Hash.* Produced and directed by Stan Woodward. Greenville, S.C.: Woodward Studio Limited, 2001. Videocassette.

Taylor, Saddler. "South Carolina Hash: By the Light of the Moon." *North Carolina Folklore Journal* 48 (fall/winter 2001): 80-87.