

Southern Living[®]

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LEFT: Jay Pierce
BELOW: The chef's signature vegetable alongside Suffolk Chicken and skillet cornbread



My Secret to Collard Greens

Greensboro chef Jay Pierce's collards are better than your mama's—his T-shirt even says so

THE DISH: Lucky 32's Almost Famous Collard Greens

THE CHEF: Jay Pierce

THE PLACE: Lucky 32 Southern Kitchen, 1421 Westover Terrace, off Wendover Avenue, Greensboro; and in Cary at 7307 Tryon Road

THE TASTE: Tender and sweet, not mushy and bitter. Lucky 32's à la carte collards glisten in olive oil and soak up the sweetness of caramelized onions and carrots.

GARY CLARK

THE SECRET: Never boil the greens.

THE TECHNIQUE: Sauté onions and carrots in melted pork fat. "You need to cover the bottom of your pan with oil for softening your seasonings," Jay says. Wilt the collard greens in the oil, and then simmer them in chicken stock.

THE TRICKS: Don't chop the greens too fine, and don't cook them too long. "Boiling destroys the cell structure, and that makes them stink," Jay explains. "With this technique, you're going to notice the silky earthiness, not the funkiness."

CHEF'S PLEA: Taste them before you douse collards with hot sauce or salt. "I want the dish to be perfect when it gets to you," Jay says.

THE CHALLENGE: Overcoming the greens' bad reputation. Jay's collards side dish has made collard lovers of former greens haters. Some even purchase the in-store T-shirt that says "My collard greens are better than your mama's."

SEE FOR YOURSELF: Watch Jay cook up a batch. Go to YouTube and search "How to make collard greens at Lucky 32 Southern Kitchen." **SL**