



Meet the Bennetts – Hot Springs Village

Description

Rebecca and Daniel Bennett are Arkansas transplants, originally from Louisiana. Meeting when they were young teenagers, their relationship blossomed from there. Eventually, the young sweethearts married and subsequently increased their family by three. Their children, now in their early 20's are Marissa, Daniel Jr., and Christopher.

Having fallen in love with Arkansas after visiting for over ten years, they decided to pull up their deep Louisiana roots and plant them here in 2020. There was a lot they liked about the area. Rebecca is a huge rockhound and found the quartz mining in Arkansas to be really cool. She said, "We visited the area every year for my birthday. We really enjoyed all the old architecture, bathhouses, and speakeasies in Hot Springs. Both of us enjoy history!"

Changes in Louisiana Led to a New Life

Why the Bennetts Made the Leap

Both Daniel, Sr., and Daniel, Jr. were employed at Exxon Mobile in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Company times got tough. Dad was actually Daniel Jr.'s boss and was faced with the difficult task of laying off his own son in May of 2020. The parents helped their eldest son start a shrimp business after he lost his job. They started off selling shrimp out of a van in Louisiana.

Three weeks after laying off Daniel Jr., the father walked into work and his bosses asked him for the keys to his company truck. Rebecca stated, "they said they were going to have to put him back on his tools. Daniel had been employed at Exxon for 17 years, building up to be a superintendent. Daniel told his bosses he wasn't going to take someone else's job and they could just drive him home. Around 10,000 employees were eventually laid off. We thought God must want us to all go into the seafood business, so that is what we did and did pretty well."

Selling Seafood in Arkansas

It came time for the Bennett's annual birthday trip to Arkansas and Daniel asked Rebecca if she

wanted to make it a work trip and sell fresh shrimp. Rebecca said, “no”. Daniel persisted which led Rebecca to make inquiries on a local area food Facebook page in order to determine if Arkansas folks would be interested in buying fresh Louisiana gulf shrimp. Arkansas was **very** interested and things took off from there.

Rebecca explained, “the Facebook post just blew up so we brought hundreds of pounds of shrimp down to Hot Springs, Arkansas, and sold out in three days. Customers asked us about other seafood items. We ended up bringing seafood to Arkansas every two weeks, a tradition which we like to continue when possible.”

“We found the Village because someone mentioned it as a place we might want to sell our seafood. Originally we set up shop just outside the west gates. We were successful,” said Rebecca. The seafood pre-orders kept pouring in and the Bennetts made the leap and moved to the area.

In addition to buying an unimproved lot in the Village, the Bennetts bought a building on Park Avenue in Hot Springs. Rebecca stated, “living in the building on Park Avenue is, “right different from our home back in Louisiana which is set on almost 300 acres. Our place in Louisiana was next to Willow Springs, which was the plantation my Paw grew up at.”

The intention was to use the Park Avenue building to open a fresh seafood market and also remodel part of the building into a home base. The building, having been vacant for 20 years, needed a lot of work. It is very close to the new roundabout, so the Bennetts determined that traffic was going to be an issue with a business located there. Because of this, the decision was made to expand in 2021 and start a food truck that served Louisiana-style cooking, in addition to their seafood operations.

Bennetts Cajun-Creole-Southern Fusion Seafood Truck



Rebecca has a passion for cooking and says her food is not traditional Cajun fare. She eventually plans on serving some specials that don't fall into the Cajun or Creole category. As a chef, she is self-taught, having married and started a family early, she enjoyed cooking for them. Her recipes have also been influenced by her mother, grandparents, and inlaws. She said, “I took their recipes and put my own special twist on them.”

“My great maternal grandfather was a cook and cooked for some famous people, so I hear. I have quite a few of his recipes that I haven't tried at the food truck yet like his Hungarian cabbage balls or his homemade macaroni,” shared Rebecca.

“All of my dishes are made from scratch with high-quality products. All the seafood is domestic; we do

not use anything imported! That's very important to me. I cook just like I'm cooking for my own family. I use real butter, fresh, preferably farm fresh vegetables & herbs, and I use heavy whipping cream and all types of fresh cheese."

Rebecca said that cooking this way, "does make the prices sometimes a bit higher than some places that use frozen or canned products. Even all my sauces are handmade which include my remoulade sauce, tartar sauce, and cocktail sauce. Occasionally, I'll make bang bang sauce."

In 2021, Bennett's Food Truck received a high honor. The business was nominated to the [Arkansas Food Hall of Fame](#), in the People's Choice Category. This is a program created and managed by Arkansas Heritage, which is a division of Arkansas Parks, Heritage, and Tourism.

More Goodness Coming

The Bennetts have branched out and are opening a brand new venture called Bennett's Juicery and Coffee Bar. This establishment will also be based in a mobile unit and will be parked in the same location as the Food Truck. Fresh juices, smoothies, coffee, and snowballs (otherwise known as snow cones) will be offered. More details coming soon.

When and Where the Food Truck and Juicery and Coffee Bar Can be Found

2022 season for Bennetts Food Truck begins Thursday, April 7!

Food Truck: Wednesday – Friday 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM and 4:00 to 6:00 PM Saturdays 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM During Crawfish Season Only

Juicery and Coffee Bar: Monday – Friday 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM (**Coming Soon!** Watch for the opening date.)

Both Mobile Units Will be Located outside the Hot Springs Village East Gate at 110 La Plaza West by Apollo.

For Inquiries or to Order Fresh Seafood

Email: bennettsseafood2020@gmail.com Please include your name, telephone number, best email address, and which location you want to pick up your order.

Rebecca said, "I have connections across the United States even in Hawaii for large orders. I can get live lobsters, live Dungeness crabs, and king crabs. I have connections for fresh scallops, mussels, etc. if someone is having an event."

All orders must be pre-paid. There are two locations where fresh seafood orders can be picked up.

1. Outside the Hot Springs Village East Gate at 110 La Plaza West by Apollo – 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM.
2. 3320 Central Ave, Hot Springs. across from Cici's pizza – 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Telephone: 225-301-2876

[Click here to visit Bennett's Facebook Page.](#)

CHERYL DOWDEN, Hot Springs Village People Gazette, March 22, 2022

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Cajun Chicken & Sausage Gumbo

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Date Created

03/22/2022

Author

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