

# Saucy!

WGN-TV reporter  
**Julian Crews** and  
**Betty Casas Hogan**  
help infuse Chicago  
with Cuban cuisine

Like anyone on TV, Julian Crews gets his share of stares when he's out and about — especially when he's wielding a skillet instead of a mic. As the founder and co-owner of Old Havana Foods, the Cuban-American newsman occasionally sets up shop in Mariano's aisles to offer a cooking demo. When he does, people often do a double-take and ask, "Hey, aren't you on WGN?"

Crews still works the news beat, hitting the streets to ask questions and get the story. But since 2008, he's been carving a niche in the specialty food business as well, offering a selection of products that celebrate the flavors of Cuban cooking. "The driving force behind Old Havana Foods is the recipes of my grandmother, Adelaida Crews, who was the Betty Crocker of her circle in Cuba," Crews says.

Like many culinary startups, Old Havana began in Crews' home kitchen, and he had plenty of input from family and friends as he developed his product line. "Cubans are very opinionated; everybody gave their two cents," he says. "Things like, our mojo didn't have enough garlic, or our beans needed more onion."

As his venture advanced, Crews teamed up with Betty Casas Hogan — a marketing expert with an MBA and a master's degree in food science — whose family also came from Cuba. "There are two basic flavor systems in Cuban cuisine," Casas Hogan explains. "Sofrito — made of sautéed onions, peppers, garlic, tomato and spices — is used in everything from black beans to meat dishes. Then there's mojo, a citrus and garlic marinade. It's used mainly at Christmas for pork roast, but can be put on beef, lamb or chicken." In addition to sofrito and mojo, the Old Havana line includes a sautéed chili seasoning, canned black beans and more.

"A lot of shoppers aren't familiar with Cuban cooking," Crews says. "So with our in-store demos, we work hard to explain to people how our product differs from, say Mexican sauces or moles. It's a different flavor profile. There's no heat. My goal is to bring authentic Cuban cooking sauces and marinades to the broader audience, Latino and non-Latino alike."

Available at all Mariano's, starting at \$1.69; [Oldhavanafoods.com](http://Oldhavanafoods.com)

## SLOW COOKER CHICKEN CACCIATORE

Serves 4-6

**2/3** cup white wine

**2** 16-ounce jars  
Old Havana  
Chili Cubano  
sautéed seasoning

**1 1/2** teaspoons finely  
chopped fresh  
rosemary

**1** 3-4-pound chicken,  
skin removed, cut  
into 8 pieces

**2** tablespoons  
flour (cornstarch  
or rice flour can be  
subbed to make it  
gluten-free)

**2** carrots, peeled, cut  
into 1/4-inch pieces

**1/2** cup pitted  
Kalamata  
olives, lightly  
smashed

**1/4** cup capers, drained  
salt and pepper

Add white wine, Chili Cubano and rosemary to slow cooker vessel, mix to combine. Season chicken with salt and pepper and sprinkle with flour (or cornstarch). Place chicken into slow cooker and top with some of the Chili Cubano and wine mixture. Add carrots, olives and capers on top of chicken. Cover and cook on high heat for 4 hours or until chicken is tender, spooning sauce



over chicken every hour. Serve chicken with sauce over cooked rice, cous-cous, pasta or quinoa.