

Strategies Applied:

Make your Creole sauce ahead of time, along with your coleslaw. Both benefit from a little sitting time.

- **Shrimp:** I used to be too much of a snob to eat frozen shrimp, but in my quest to eat more fish and seafood I've caved - and found out what I was missing. Thaw overnight in the fridge - I like to put a few paper napkins at the bottom of the container to catch the liquid so they don't start out soggy. I buy mine at Aldi (a sister company to Trader Joes) for \$4.99 or so a pound. I used 3/4 pound, so my cost was \$3.74.
- **Bread:** Again, for these rolls, I shopped Aldi - 8 of their big, soft Lovin' Oven rolls were \$1.25, so four were 62 cents.
- **Cabbage:** Mine was almost 4 pounds, bought at a St. Patrick's day sale, for 17 cents a pound. It's still perfectly good, several weeks later. I used half, so my cost was 34 cents.
- **Corn Meal:** I have to guess at this, so 3/4 cup is about 30 cents.
- **Lettuce:** On sale about a week ago for 78 cents a head - I'm not too much of a snob to have a few cheap salads! Call it retro. I saved out about a cup for my Po' Boys, so the cost is about 3 cents.
- **Mayonnaise:** I bought 8/11 at \$2.99 for 32 ounce jar, which was not a great price, and again in April 2012 for \$1.99 for 32 ounces with a sale and coupon. I always buy the jars, not the squeeze bottles because they are generally the same price, but you get a larger jar, and there is less waste. If I'm making a recipe that calls for a lot of Mayo (potato salad, cole slaw) I'll whip up some home-made for dirt cheap. Since I only made 1/2 my cole-slaw, I just used the jar. Cost for cole-slaw and Creole sauce about 50 cents.
- **Buttermilk:** I didn't happen to have any on hand, but I wanted a thicker product than just plain milk with a little vinegar - I added a touch (about a teaspoon) of mayo to my milk. Cost per gallon this week is \$2.50, so the 3/4 cup is about 12 cents.
- **Sour Cream:** Very cheap during the Holidays and often on sale every few weeks. Since it lasts so long, I'll pick it up then. I do think some Sour Creams are much better than others, but if I'm using it a recipe, I'll use whatever is on hand. I like to keep it very clean so it lasts a long time and store upside down. Just stir together if it separates. Last bought September 2011 for \$1.60 for 16 ounces, around Easter 2012 for \$1.00 for 16 ounces. 3/4 cup is about 30 cents.
- **Hot Sauce:** I haven't paid for Frank's or Tabasco in ages - I buy smaller bottles and use a coupon when it's on sale.
- **Mustard and Sweet relish:** I'm estimating 3 cents - but like all condiments, buy during the summer months when coupons and sales are available.
- **Vinegar:** Every so often they'll have coupons for vinegar, making name brand lower than store price. Best time to buy is generally around Easter for the basic White or Apple Cider. Summer is usually when you'll find the good cooking vinegar on sale. I'll find sale prices, too, around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Stock up on the best prices because they keep forever. Often sales are not advertised, and you can find coupons, now and then, for both the basic and the fancier vinegar. A huge jug is about a dollar - and a few teaspoons are negligible.

- **Spices and sugar:** I generally never add in the spices for a meal, (that's too fussy, even for me!) so I just count this as negligible, and the sugar is about 5 cents.