

# Wynton Marsalis



The eight-time Grammy-winning trumpeter tours South America and Japan this month, promoting his latest Columbia Records release, *Blue Interlude*.

*You appear to be in great shape. Do you follow a special diet?*

**No, I don't. I used to go through phases when I'd eat only one thing at a time. But I'm off that now. And if I'm in shape, we're all in trouble.**

*What kind of food do you like best?*

**I love food so much, and I've eaten so much of it, that I don't have a simple answer. Italian is the finest, French is the most sensual (because of the sauces), Japanese is the most beautiful, Chinese is the most varied, Argentinian is the best for beef, and Scandinavian and Basque are great, too. New Orleans food is the most soulful, and the quintessential soul dish is gumbo. And you know why? Because when you eat it, it's like eating an explosion, yet each ingredient retains its own identity.**

*Can you name some of your favorite dishes from your hometown of New Orleans?*

**Red beans and rice, crawfish, shrimp Creole, jambalaya, po'boys and hot-sausage sandwiches.**

*Do you have fond memories of your mom's "Big Easy" cooking?*

**She made great gumbo, ribs and shrimp—shrimp of all sorts and all demeanors. She knew how to put a suit of clothes on a shrimp.**

*Do you cook?*

**Yes. Once every two years to remind myself of why I don't cook.**

*Are there three things that are always in your refrigerator?*

**Baking soda, water and ice.**

*If you could invite three musicians from all of history to dinner, who would they be and why would you choose them?*

**Mozart, Jo Jones and Ray Nance—because I don't think they'd eat that much, which is perfect for someone who doesn't cook.**

*Name some of your favorite restaurants.*

**In New York, Jezebel, Lola, Sushi Zen. I hardly ever eat out in New Orleans, but when I do, I love the Praline Connection.**

*What's your idea of the perfect romantic meal? What kind of music would you play?*

**A romantic meal should be spontaneous, deeply personal and with unforced beauty. I'd pick something by Ben Webster or Billie Holiday.**