



# where ya at, matt

Julie Case discovers the fun  
flavors of a food truck chef

PORTRAIT BY RICK DAHMS

## **Matt Lewis knows how to dish it out.**

Walk up to his roving restaurant any given day and you're likely to get more than a muffuletta—you'll get served some attitude, too. In a city starved for banter—and some darn good Cajun—Matt and his food truck, Where Ya At Matt, go a long way. Six days a week the chef/roadie dishes out smart comments, along with po' boys and gumbo, beignets and jambalaya, to as many as 300 people.

The southerner-turned-Seattleite has dabbled in other things: He took the MCAT and planned to go to medical school after college, but then he waited a few tables. Next thing, the New Orleans native was graduating second in his class from the Culinary Institute of America. He landed in Seattle in 2001 and worked the restaurant scene for years before ditching it for the mortgage industry and holiday time with his family.

Mortgages weren't his passion. Food, he says, is passion. Plus, an old itch had returned. "I'm very entrepreneurial," he says. "And I never last long working for someone else."

In 2010, Where Ya At Matt rolled down its first street, with Matt dishing up a bit of home.

"It's the same food I cook at my house," says Matt. "It's the food I crave. It went hand-in-hand with Similac in my family when I was growing up. It's in me. It's my soul food."

The restaurant took off. Today, virtually everything is made from scratch—muffuletta rolls to mayo. Matt's also hosting crawfish boils in the summer; in February he launched his first "gospel brunch," choir and Bloody Marys included. His proudest moments, though, are still when *yats*—it's what people from New Orleans call each other (notice it in the restaurant's name?)—walk up and thank him. **■**

You can find out where  
Matt and his food truck  
are by going to [www  
.wheremyatmatt.com](http://www.wheremyatmatt.com).