

K's Kitchen: French dip without the meat

By Kathryn Reed

I'm guessing the last time I had a French dip sandwich was when I lived under the roof of my parents' house. That's what happens when you become a vegetarian.

It's amazing how portabella mushrooms can be such a wonderful substitute for beef. I'm not sure why it took so long to figure out this would work well.

Sandwiches are something I tend to eat more of in the summer than winter, but this is so hearty that I can see making it year-round.

Be aware that regular Worcestershire sauce has anchovies. There are vegan varieties available.

I bought the mushrooms presliced to make things easier.

To have the sandwiches all done at once it will be best to put them under the broiler to melt the cheese. I only made two and just zapped them in the microwave. Swiss is the traditional cheese used on French dip, but you could use something else. I would stick with a white cheese, though.



Mushroom French Dip Sandwiches

- 2 tsps unsalted butter
- 2½ T olive oil, divided
- 2 large yellow onions, vertically sliced
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- 1¼ lbs portabello mushroom caps, gills removed, sliced into strips
- ¾ C vegetable broth
- 1/3 C dry sherry
- 1 T vegetarian Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp chopped fresh thyme
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 T Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp horseradish
- 4 hoagie rolls
- 4 slices ultra-thin Swiss cheese

Heat butter and 1½ teaspoons of oil in a large skillet over medium. Lower heat to medium-low, cooking until golden. Then add salt, stir.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a separate large skillet over medium-high. Arrange half of the mushrooms in skillet in a single layer and cook until golden-brown on both sides. Place mushrooms in a bowl. Repeat process with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and half of mushrooms.

Combine all mushrooms in pan, add broth, sherry,

Worcestershire sauce, thyme, soy sauce, and pepper. Bring mixture to a boil; reduce to a simmer; cook 5 minutes.

Combine mustard and horseradish. Spread on top halves of rolls.

Divide mushrooms onto bottom half of rolls. Pour au jus into four ramekins.

Preheat broiler to high. Divide onions onto mushrooms, then cover with cheese. Place on baking sheet, broil until cheese melts. Serve with au jus.

Borg to sign latest Owen McKenna thriller

South Shore author Todd Borg's latest book in his Owen McKenna Mystery Thriller "Tahoe Skydrop" is out.

After murderous thieves steal Tahoe Robotics' software worth a billion dollars, they kidnap a child who reportedly knows the password. The child's father contacts Tahoe Detective Owen McKenna. McKenna discovers that the child is being held at a mountaintop compound protected by a fence and armed guards. McKenna decides to attack the gang by dropping in at night on a paraglider. But the plan goes horribly wrong. If he can't find the child, the child will die.

Here are Borg's upcoming book signings:

South Lake Tahoe

Aug. 3, 4:30-7pm: Artifacts, 4000 Lake Tahoe Blvd. (in the Raleys Village Center)

Aug. 12, 8:30am: Red Hut Cafe at Ski Run Boulevard

Aug. 15, 6:30pm: Talk and signing at the South Lake Tahoe Library, 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Reno

Aug. 4, 11am: Talk and signing at Sundance Bookstore at 121 California Ave.,

Tahoe City

Aug. 4, 3pm: Geared for Games, Boatworks Mall

Truckee

Aug. 9, 5-7pm: Truckee Thursday street fair in the Word After Word Books tent, 10118 Donner Pass Road

Carson City/Carson Valley

Aug. 10, 6pm: Talk and signing, Shelby's Bookshoppe, 1663 Lucerne St. in Minden Village, Minden

Aug. 11, 8:30am: Red Hut Cafe 4385 S. Carson, Carson City

Sept. 29-30: Exhibiting and signing all of his books at the Candy Dance Festival in Genoa

Oct. 2, 4-6pm: Exhibiting and signing books at the Minden Library Author's Day, 1625 Library Lane

Oct. 22, 5:30pm: Talk and signing at Browser's Books in Carson City, 711 E Washington St.

Mountain View

Sept. 8-9: Exhibiting and signing books at the Mountain View Art & Wine Festival

Sacramento

Oct. 26-27: Exhibiting and signing books at the Sacramento Fine Arts Show, Sacramento Convention Center

Nov. 16-17: Exhibiting and signing books at the Sacramento Harvest Festival, CalExpo

San Mateo

Nov. 9-11: Exhibiting and signing books at the San Mateo Harvest Festival

San Jose

Nov. 23-24: Exhibiting and signing books at the San Jose Harvest Festival, San Jose Convention Center.

Will's Kids bringing 'Macbeth' to Valhalla

Now in its third year, Will's Kids for the Arts is a free art fair for children on the South Shore, featuring arts and crafts booths and a performance by Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival's D.G. Menchetti Young Shakespeare Program.

It will be Aug. 3 from 11am-4pm at Valhalla.

There will be an hourlong performance of Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival production of "Macbeth" that is an interactive version appropriate for children of all ages.

Will's Kids for the Arts brings together Lake Tahoe nonprofit service organizations with local arts organizations to expose local youth to the arts and allow them to discover the joy of self-expression while promoting arts education on the South Shore.

Reservations for the performance are requested.

Fay-Luther trailhead improvements coming

The Fay-Luther trailhead in the Carson Valley will be closed Thursday and Friday.

Hiking access will be available by using the Jobs Peak Ranch trailhead.

Qualcon Contractors will be fixing a 2,500-square-foot section area, including filling in potholes.

Carson Valley Trails Association is paying for the work.

Books in Incline dumpster belonged to Thomas Jefferson



Some of the items found by Max Brown in a trash bin in Incline Village.
Photo/Provided

By Jordan Cutler-Tietjen, Sacramento Bee

In December 2014, Max Brown was picking through an Incline Village dumpster for a community service project when a collection of 1980s cassettes caught his eye. Fancying himself a collector, he pulled them out and inspected them.

Then he noticed the substantial pile of worn books buried beneath them.

Then it started raining.

It wasn't until six months had passed that Brown offhandedly bent back the cover of one of the books and saw "from the library of Thomas Jefferson" inscribed on the open page.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: Mazda CX-9 is a sporty SUV



The Mazda CX-9 is like an SUV sports car. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Now in its second model year, the 2018 Mazda CX-9 is a full-size SUV at 199-inches-long, a 115-inch wheelbase and almost 78-inches-wide. But it drives like a compact or mid-size SUV. Mazda creates this virtual illusion via a new for 2018 handling creation called G-Vectoring Control. It uses engine timing to control chassis dynamics, creating an imperceptible intervention which allows for more driver confidence and more control giving the driver the ability to make the CX-9 do exactly what he/she (or both) wants. It goes where you point it all with feeling (no numbness).

But it's something that comes standard in every Mazda, a driver's edge. Go to any race track and you will find more Mazdas than any other car, be it a Miata (the most raced car in the world), a Mazda 3 or an RX-7 or RX-8. You will find this edge or sharpness in every Mazda, and now the CX-9

delivers like a Miata when it comes to driving feel.

CX-9 is a beautiful vehicle. The first generation CX-9 was a stand out and the new gen follows in its path with the Kodo design philosophy emanating from the best front end in the business the Mazda grille. CX-9's lines are beautifully flowing as like one of the two most beautiful airplanes ever to fly, the Supermarine Spitfire (the other is the P-51 Mustang). Mazda's logo or emblem looks like a seagull in flight and legend has it that the designer of the Spitfire, R.J. Mitchell, used to watch and study seagulls flying in creating the eventual Spitfire design. Co-efficient of drag is a low 0.35.

Mazda didn't stop with the design and G-Vectoring Control when it came to deigning the turbo charged direct injected (SkyActiv) 2.5L DOHC, 16 valve powerplant. Instead of using a twin-scroll turbo for quick spool-up, Mazda went one better (maybe two) by creating a Dynamic Pressure Turbo that through valving and port design smooths and evens out exhaust pressure pulses which especially helps improve turbo response at rpms below 1,500 rpm.



Specifications

Price \$31,520 to about \$45,000 for the Signature model

Engine

2.5L turbocharged DOHC, 16

valve direct injected inline
four 250 hp @ 5,000 rpm
310 lb.-ft. of torque @
2,000 rpm
Redline 6,300 rpm

Transmission

Six-speed torque converter
automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 115.3 inches
Length 199.4 inches
Width 77.5 inches
Height 67.6 inches
Track (f/r) 65.3/65.2 inches
Ground clearance 8.8 inches
Weight (FWD/AWD) 4,054/4,307
pounds
GVWR (FWD/AWD) 5,661/5,816
pounds
Tow capacity 3,500 pounds
Steering lock to lock 3.1
turns
Turning circle 38.4 feet
Fuel capacity 19.5 gallons
Wheels 20X8.5 inches
Tires 255/50X20
Co-efficient of drag 0.35

Performance

0-60 mph 7.54 seconds
50-70 mph 3.98seconds
50-70 uphill (6-7 percent)
5.82 seconds
Top Speed Does anyone really
care?

Fuel economy EPA rated (AWD)
20/26/23 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 23 mpg in rural
country and suburban driving
and 28-29 mpg on a level
highway at legal speeds.

Mazda's 2.5L turbo creates 250 hp at just 5,000 rpm and a stump pulling 310 pounds of twist at just 2,000 rpm, but to achieve 250 hp premium fuel is required. Otherwise, if the computer senses 87 octane regular fuel it retards spark and peak hp to 227 at 5,000 rpm. Because the torque is so plentiful at low rpms, I didn't really notice any difference and I doubt you will to unless you are tracking the CX-9 at Laguna Seca. Power is sent to all four wheels via a six-speed torque converter auto cog-swapper.

Performance is little hindered by its near 4,400 pounds of curb weight knocking off 0-60 mph in a quick 7.54 seconds. Acceleration builds with speed at 50-70 mph cones up in 3.98 seconds and the same run up a 6-7 percent grade only slows that time to 5.82 seconds. Throttle response is instantaneous once above 10 mph and grows with speed. It will take a few days to get used to the throttle as it is strong.

Fuel economy for my AWD tester is EPA rated at 20/26/23 and don't expect much better. Highway mileage at a steady 70 mph is 28.6 mpg, but overall for 500 miles the CX-9 averaged 22.1 mpg. In my 200-mile round trip to Carson City it averaged 23.4 mpg in fairly aggressive driving. Mazdas are known for fuel economy as the company has held the highest CAFÉ in the industry. CX-9 is average in that category. Fuel capacity is a needed 19.5 gallons.

Handling is Mazda sharp, with sophisticated independent coil suspension all around and turned to perfection. Big meats (tires, 255/50X20) are mounted to beautiful 20X8.5-inch alloys

so tenacious grip is standard. But the steering is a tad slow at 3.1 turns lock to lock albeit with good feel and accuracy. But with the G-Vectoring Control, it goes around corners like water in a hose communicating to the driver everything he needs to know when blasting the twisties. It is good.

Ride quality is extremely smooth and quiet. It absorbs bumps and other road imperfections with aplomb. Engine speed at 70 mph is 2,150 rpm in top or sixth gear. There is no wind, road or engine noise and I already told you that CX-9 is smoooooth and quiet.

Mazda is second to none in safety as my CX-9 Touring had it all with every acronym plus auto high beams, lane departure and lane keep assist and Smart Brake. LED adaptive front headlights were fabulous.

Inside is a Mazda leather interior which is sublimely comfortable, infinitely adjustable and super supple. Instrumentation is total with a heads-up display which now recognizes signage. There is even good room in the third-row seating. Now for the big negative, the sound system. Maybe it's designed to improve your manual dexterity, but it requires too many steps and is much too complicated. Someone from a competitor must have designed it.

Cargo capacity is huge with over 71 cubic feet behind the first row, 38 cubes behind the second row and 14 cubes or about the volume of your average mid-size sedan trunk behind the third row.

Pricing starts at about \$33,000 with shipping for the CX-9. My tester was a top of the line Grand Touring in incredible Soul Red Crystal (\$595) stickering at \$42,865 plus \$940 for the boat from Japan. When you look at the competition, Mazda may offer a lot more SUV for a lot less money. This is a high performance near luxo ride for \$43 large and some change. There are lesser equipped mid-size rides that cost that kind of

dough. I am not sure if the bean counters had sabotaged adding machines but that seems like its too good a deal. I won't say anything if you won't.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

25 years of Spanish immersion at LTCC



Paella making with Tere Tibbetts, right, is a favorite during ISSI. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Don't be surprised to hear more Spanish than English at Lake Tahoe Community College this week. Monday begins the 25th year of ISSI – Intensive Spanish Summer Institute.

What started with 150 students in three levels of grammar courses has evolved into 16 levels from low beginning to high superior. Hundreds of people show up for the weeklong course; some are locals, some travel to South Lake Tahoe just for this instruction.

While fun is part of the day, the whole goal is to get people talking Spanish. Some take the classes to help at work, others want to use it while traveling. The reasons to participate are numerous.

“What I like best about ISSI is the commitment of the teachers and the camaraderie of the students. I'm excited about going back for a third year in a row because I know I will increase my vocabulary and comprehension,” Rhoda Shaponik told *Lake Tahoe News*.

A big reason for this South Lake Tahoe resident to learn Spanish is that she has spent part of the last few winters in Mexico.

“The locals really appreciate me trying to speak Spanish,” Shaponik said. “My goal in retirement is to speak Spanish fluently.”

Shaponik is part of the 40 percent of attendees who are returnees.

ISSI was the brainchild of Sue O'Connor who was the bilingual coordinator at Lake Tahoe Unified School District. She needed more Spanish language training for the teachers. With the backing of LTCC Spanish faculty member Diane Rosner ISSI was born.

Today ISSI is run by O'Connor and Maxine Alper, with the help

of countless instructors and others.

“Throughout the years, based on observations, feedback and student evaluations, we have added in mini-courses at lunchtime, at 3:30pm and various evening events. We also collaborate with the Community Education program to offer other events,” Alper told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The day starts with grammar at 8am for all students. Another dose of grammar comes in the afternoon. Mixed in each day are various breakout sessions that range from learning various cooking specialties, to working on pronouncing words, to history, to culture. There are about 100 choices.

“Students really love the small group conversation classes. Some of the students tell us that this is the first time they have spoken with a native speaker,” O’Connor told *LTN*. “Students like the atmosphere with all the decorations. They tell us they especially love how the Commons is modeled after a traditional plaza, the hub of the Spanish-speaking community where everyone passes through daily.”

Various Spanish-speaking cultures are featured – from Mexico to Spain to Costa Rica and more.

Some of the offerings are repeated each year, some are new to keep things fresh.

“Most of our ideas come from the student evaluations and from instructors who have an interest, expertise or experience with a subject,” Alper said. “We also come up with some ideas by looking at what we ourselves find interesting.”

To keep going another 25 years the co-directors realize ISSI needs to be responsive to the changing needs of the students and the community. It’s like any education program, it has to adjust even if the language stays the same.

Organizers have had to adapt with California’s changes in

regards to repeatability of classes.

“The classes are for college credit so repeatability is not allowed. However, we have added in new levels to allow students to take more classes,” O’Connor said. “In addition, the instructor at the highest level, high superior, writes new curriculum every year to allow these high-level students to continue taking classes.”

Each year new mini-courses and breakout sessions are added as well.

ISSI often sells out, so to speak, so when it’s time to sign up for 2019, but sure to do so right away.

Opinion: Retaliatory tariffs take bite out of U.S. apple industry

By Jeff Colombini and Mike Wade, San Francisco Chronicle

The United States exports one out of every three apples it grows. California, Washington, New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan together produce 90 percent of the apples grown in America. Although we apple growers come from various places, we share one common concern: going out of business.

While having to close the farm gates for good is always in the back of growers’ minds, as profit margins are razor thin and our livelihoods depend on the grace of Mother Nature, it has never been more of a reality than now due to the retaliatory tariffs being imposed on apple exports by Mexico, India and China.

Thousands of jobs in rural America are at risk, not just in growing and picking the crop but also in equipment, fuel and fertilizer sales, and in packing and transportation.

Saying that trade is critical to the apple industry is an understatement.

Read the whole story

Getting to the bottom of tequila/mezcal

By Jeffrey Miller, The Conversation

In less than a decade, worldwide sales of tequila have doubled, while sales of premium and ultra-premium brands have shot up by 292 percent and 706 percent, respectively.

In recent years, you may have heard of tequila tastings and walked by a new mezcal bar – and wondered about the difference between the two. Or you've seen a headline proclaiming that a shot of tequila a day will keep the doctor away.

As a food historian, I hope to debunk some myths and explore some little-known aspects of the Mexican spirit that's become a global phenomenon.

What's the deal with the worm?

Walking through the tequila section of your local liquor store, you may see a bottle with a worm floating in it. But if you see one, you're looking at a bottle of mezcal – not tequila.

While all tequila is mezcal, all mezcal is not tequila: To be labeled as tequila the spirit must be distilled from at least 51 percent blue agave (*Agave weberii*) and made within a region around the Mexican town of Tequila.

Mezcals, on the other hand, can be made from any of 30 aloe-like succulents and can be made in a number of Mexican states.

As for the worm, it's the larva of the maguey moth, an animal that lives and feeds on agave plants.

It was originally inserted into bottles of Gusano Rojo mezcal as a marketing gimmick. The worm isn't a psychedelic as fraternity lore would have it, but it is edible and is sold as a delicacy in food markets across central Mexico.

Can tequila actually be good for you?

Tequila has long been thought of as a cure for various ailments.

During the influenza pandemic of 1918, Mexican doctors would prescribe tequila with lemon and salt to treat flu symptoms. To this day, Mexicans stir it into hot tea with honey to assuage sore throats.

In recent years, you may have come across articles giddily announcing that a shot of tequila a day can lower bad cholesterol and blood sugar.

But the study showing lower cholesterol levels was conducted on mice, and there's been no evidence showing the same effect on humans. (In fact, the findings for mice couldn't be replicated in a similar study.) Meanwhile, agave has been shown to have a higher fructose content than sugar – and even high-fructose corn syrup.

In the end, there's not likely to be any inadvertent health benefits to your tequila benders.

Is the margarita named after a woman?

Tequila is mixed with lime juice, salt and liquor to make the margarita, one of the more popular summer cocktails.

Most of the margarita's origin stories claim it was named after a girl named Margarita. One version of the legend says that the drink was named after dancer Marjorie King: On a trip to Mexico, she asked a bartender near Tijuana to make her a drink with tequila since she was allergic to grain-based spirits. Another version traces the drink to Ensenada, Mexico, where, in the early 1940s, a bartender concocted the drink to honor Margarita Henkel, the daughter of the German Ambassador to Mexico.

Neither story is probably true. Before Prohibition, a very popular cocktail in California was the Brandy Daisy, a mix of brandy, Curaçao liqueur and lemon juice. As people drifted over the border into Mexico to evade Prohibition's restrictions, it's likely that bartenders began making the drink with Mexico's national spirit, which would have been more available and cheaper.

"Margarita" is Spanish for daisy, so when Americans ordered a daisy, it would have been natural for the bartender to reply, "One margarita, coming up."

Jeffrey Miller is an associate professor and program coordinator for hospitality management, Colorado State University.

Sierra Club, other groups oppose Nev. energy measure

By Colton Lochhead, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Four major clean energy advocacy groups announced Thursday that they oppose Question 3, the ballot initiative that would break up NV Energy’s monopoly and create an open energy market in Nevada.

The Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project and Western Resource Advocates each cited concerns over market uncertainty, and what that could do to renewable energy projects underway in the state, saying the measure could “disrupt the state’s progress toward a clean energy future.”

Read the whole story