

K's Kitchen: Simple lettuce wraps

By Kathryn Reed

Lettuce wraps are really just tacos without the carbs. They are often smaller, which might have people eating less.

While I used what I call “fake meat” because I’m a vegetarian, it would be possible to use ground beef, pork or even fish. You’ll just need to cook them. Using the microwave works for the “fake meat” because it just needs to be heated, not cooked.

This recipe is flavorful, but not spicy. All of that can be changed based on seasoning.



Lettuce Wraps

1C white vinegar

1C water

$\frac{1}{4}$ C granulated sugar

2 tsp kosher salt, divided

1 C carrots, matchstick

6 garlic gloves, minced

1 jalapeno, thinly sliced

12 ounces “fake” ground beef

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp chili powder

8 butter lettuce or Bibb lettuce leaves

$\frac{3}{4}$ C cilantro, chopped

$\frac{3}{4}$ C white onion, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ C Mexican crema

In small sauce pan combine vinegar, water, sugar, and half teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil; stir until sugar dissolved. Remove from heat.

Place carrots, garlic, and jalapeño slices in a medium bowl; pour liquid mixture over vegetable mixture. Let stand at room temperature.

Combine “meat,” onion, cumin, chili powder, and remaining salt in a medium bowl; mix well. Heat in microwave until hot.

Place lettuce leaves on a large serving platter. Divide “meat” mixture evenly among lettuce leaves.

Drain liquid from vegetables. Top each wrap evenly with mixture. Sprinkle cilantro evenly, then drizzle crema on top.

Food that goes bad in fridge

amounts to trillions of gallons of wasted water

By Karen Kaplan, Los Angeles Times

You walk into the grocery store with the best intentions, filling your cart with kale, broccolini, tofu and Greek yogurt. Then you get home, feel pressed for time and order a pizza.

Before you know it, the perishables are going bad at the back of the fridge. They'll wind up in the trash, like so many other well-intentioned meals that never came to be.

Your efforts to eat better have flopped again. But that's not your only fail. You've also squandered the natural resources used to produce that food and contributed to environmental degradation for nothing.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Manicotti with pesto and marinara

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes comfort food is what's needed and calories should be ignored. When three types of cheeses are in a recipe you know it's not health food.

Still, as long as this is not something you eat on a regular basis, go for it.

In the past I've made manicotti with spinach as the only

vegetable. I liked the carrots in it because it added a slight crunch as they aren't sautéed before being stuffed into the shells.

By using pesto it was not necessary to add garlic or basil.

As with many Italian dishes, it was even better the next day.



Vegetarian Manicotti with Pesto

1 box of manicotti noodles

1 medium yellow onion, chopped

2 medium carrots, minced

1 tsp olive oil

5 ounces fresh spinach

15 ounces ricotta cheese

1 C shredded Parmesan/Romano cheese blend

$\frac{1}{4}$ C pesto

2 C mozzarella, grated

Mix of black pepper, oregano, thyme

1 jar of marinara sauce

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cook shells according to directions.

Pour half of the marinara sauce in 9 x 13 baking dish.

In bowl, mix ricotta, Parmesan, pesto, spinach, carrots, onions and spices. Stuff mixture into cooked shells. Place shells into pan. Cover the shells with the rest of the marinara sauce. Then cover with mozzarella.

Bake for 30 minutes.

K's Kitchen: A healthy salad dressing

By Kathryn Reed

Blue cheese is normally my go-to salad dressing. Nothing about it is healthy. And that usually doesn't matter.

But it does matter if salads are a staple in one's diet. I go in waves of eating salads on a regular basis. It means the blue cheese should stay in the fridge.

Changing the greens, what's added to it and the dressing can keep it fresh – an healthier.

The idea for this dressing came from wanting to use the tahini I had that had not been touched in a while.

The salad was simple, but delicious with the dressing. I used spinach, carrots cut into match stick pieces, and a chopped apple.



Tahini Salad Dressing

1/3 C tahini, well stirred

1/3 C water

$\frac{1}{4}$ C lemon juice

1 tsp garlic salt

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Make sure the tahini is well blended. Pour over greens.

Tickets available for Tahoe City food-wine event

One of Tahoe City's signature events and a fundraiser for the nonprofit Tahoe City Downtown Association, the 13th annual Tahoe City Food & Wine Classic, will return to the shore of Lake Tahoe on June 16 from 1-5pm.

It features more than 30 tasting locations that highlight varietals from area wine producers and gourmet bites from top North Lake Tahoe restaurants and caterers. It all happens along North Lake Boulevard in downtown Tahoe City.

In addition to fine wines, the event also includes craft brews and spirits, as well as non-alcoholic tasting options.

Tahoe City's stores will be open for shopping, and live music will provide entertainment and dancing.

Wine Walk tickets are \$45 per person in advance and \$50 day of. Ticket price includes admittance, wine, beer, spirits and non-alcoholic tastings (for participants 21 years and over), commemorative wine glass, bite-sized morsels, music and parking. Designated driver tickets are available for \$20 day of and include food sampling only. Kids under 6 are free.

For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, go **online**. Day of tickets will be available at the Boatworks Mall and the North Lake Tahoe Visitor's Center (cash only).

N. Nevada meal kits offer local veggies, meats and more

By Johnathan L. Wright, Reno Gazette-Journal

It all began with a box gone astray.

The shipment hailed from Blue Apron, one of the meal kit purveyors emerging in recent years to harness millennials' inclination for good food and online commerce to their disinclination to shop for and make nightly dinners from scratch.

Christie Casey-Braun opened the box on auto-pilot, thinking it was a giveaway or promotion or sample, not noticing the box should have been delivered to her neighbor.

“I thought, ‘This is a cool concept, but I wonder if there’s a local option,’ Casey-Braun said. ‘I wonder if there’s a way to do this local and better.’ ”

Read the whole story

Mountain Brews bringing small batch beer to Tahoe



Ron Buck talks beer with Larry Armstrong and Joan Bigelow at Mountain Brews. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Subtle, powerful, full bodied, visually appealing – and, well,

delicious. And that, after all, is what really matters – the taste.

Lake Tahoe Mountain Brews, better known just as Mountain Brews, is the latest brewery to open in South Lake Tahoe.

“We can’t do quantity, so we are focusing on quality,” brewmaster Ron Buck told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Five incredibly different beers fill the tray. And much like a wine tasting, there is an order they are to be consumed.



A flight of beers is worth sharing. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“These recipes are so full bodied that the alcohol is masked,” Buck explains.

That could be why after finishing the Imperial Rye (12 percent alcohol) it was necessary to slow down a bit. Note taking got sketchy with my three favorites having the most alcohol – Belgian Festival (9.3 percent) and Porter (9.8 percent) being

the other two.

This flight of five 4-ounce beers (\$15) is too much for this taster to finish, but it would be great to share. My least favorites are left behind – Evolution Ale and Herbal IPA. Even so, it's not that there is anything wrong with them, it's just a preference thing.



Taylor Flynn designed the cold storage facility in what used to be a closet. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Taylor Flynn, owner of the monthly *Mountain News*, has transformed the bottom floor of the newspaper office into a brewery. Upstairs is still home to the paper.

It looks nothing like it once did, when a desk greeted those who entered the office and a couch was near the fire place. It was dark and uninviting – which could have been done on purpose.

Today it's a combination of woodsy mountain meets industrial

décor. The bar is a 12-foot slab of redwood. Wood floors have lightened the room up. Vapor lights and the corrugated metal at the bar, along with the metal pipes that hide the wires balance the wood. The varied metal chairs and wine barrel tables, along with the brick at the fireplace and behind the bar tie it all together.

Above the fireplace is a screen showing pictures of Tahoe taken by Buck. With Flynn being an accomplished photographer, it's likely his photos will be part of the rotation at some point. Music comes on when the doors open to the public. It's possible some sporting event will be on that will be muted, but this isn't a sports bar.

This is a place for beer aficionados.

"There will be new recipes each season," Buck said. The beers being served now were made in January.



Stainless steel vats fill one of the back rooms of Mountain Brews. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For now, there are no plans to extend the hours or days of week. It's Buck and Flynn who are behind the bar pouring the beers. They are able to explain to patrons exactly what's in them, the process and what's to come.

Buck honed his skills at the former Mt. Tallac Brewery and Cold Water Brewery, as well as being a home brewer.

His binder of recipes looks more like a chemistry manual. Software can help make subtle changes. Then there is the ability to age or condition the beer on oak, vanilla bean, lemon grass, sage, and various hops.

"More ingredients are available to brews because of the process. You can layer in the flavors," Buck said.

The three-barrel system is the equivalent of six kegs per batch.

Flynn had the idea of opening the brewery about five years ago. Originally he bought the building with the idea of hiring a staff to make the paper a weekly. Personal issues put the kibosh on those plans, so Plan B was concocted. He's happy the nano-brewery is what came to fruition.

Food might be offered in the future, but that will take some doing with government agencies. For now, crackers and pretzels are available.

Bottling and growlers would be the more immediate additions.



Ron Buck and Taylor Flynn in January put some muscle into beer making. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Notes:

- Address – 963 Third St., South Lake Tahoe.
- Hours – Friday and Saturday, 4-10pm.
- Prices – \$6 to \$8 per glass
- Alcohol content – 6.3 to 12 percent
- Current selection – Evolution Ale, Herbal IPA, Imperial Rye, Porter, Belgian Festival.

Lowly mushroom is becoming a nutritional star

By Robert Beelman, The Conversation

Mushrooms are often considered only for their culinary use because they are packed with flavor-enhancers and have gourmet appeal. That is probably why they are the second most popular pizza topping next to pepperoni.

In the past, food scientists like me often praised mushrooms as healthy because of what they don't contribute to the diet; they contain no cholesterol and gluten and are low in fat, sugars, sodium and calories. But that was selling mushrooms short. They are very healthy foods and could have medicinal properties, because they are good sources of protein, B-vitamins, fiber, immune-enhancing sugars found in the cell walls called beta-glucans, and other bioactive compounds.

Mushrooms have been used as food and sometimes as medicine for centuries. In the past, most of the medicinal use of mushrooms was in Asian cultures, while most Americans have been skeptical of this concept. However, due to changing consumer attitudes rejecting the pharmaceutical approach as the only answer to healing, that seems to be changing.

I study the nutritional value of fungi and mushrooms, and my laboratory has conducted a great deal of research on the lowly mushroom. We have discovered that mushrooms may be even better for health than previously known. They can be excellent sources of four key dietary micronutrients that are all known to be important to healthy aging. We are even looking into whether some of these could be important in preventing Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

Four key nutrients

Important nutrients in mushrooms include selenium, vitamin D, glutathione and ergothioneine. All are known to function as antioxidants that can mitigate oxidative stress and all are known to decline during aging. Oxidative stress is considered the main culprit in causing the diseases of aging such as cancer, heart disease and dementia.

Ergothioneine, or ergo, is actually an antioxidant amino acid that was initially discovered in 1909 in ergot fungi. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins.

Ergo is produced in nature primarily by fungi, including mushrooms. Humans cannot make it, so it must be obtained from dietary sources. There was little scientific interest in ergo until 2005, when pharmacology Professor Dirk Grundemann discovered that all mammals make a genetically coded transporter that rapidly pulls ergo into the red blood cells. They then distribute ergo around the body, where it accumulates in tissues that are under the most oxidative stress. That discovery led to a significant increase in scientific inquiry about possible role of ergo in human health. One study led to a leading American scientist, Dr. Solomon Snyder, recommending that ergo be considered as a new vitamin.

In 2006, a graduate student of mine, Joy Dubost, and I discovered that edible cultivated mushrooms were extremely rich sources of ergo and contained at least 10 times the level in any other food source. Through collaboration with John Ritchie and post-doctoral scientist Michael Kalaras at the Hershey Medical Center at Penn State, we showed that mushrooms are also a leading dietary source of the master antioxidant in all living organisms, glutathione. No other food even comes close to mushrooms as a source of both of these antioxidants.

Our current research is centered on evaluating the potential

of ergo in mushrooms to prevent or treat neurodegenerative diseases of aging, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. We based this focus on several intriguing studies conducted with aging Asian populations. One study conducted in Singapore showed that as people aged the ergo content in their blood declined significantly, which correlated with increasing cognitive impairment.

The authors suggested that a dietary deficiency of ergo might predispose individuals to neurological diseases. A recent epidemiological study conducted with over 13,000 elderly people in Japan showed that those who ate more mushrooms had less incidence of dementia. The role of ergo consumed with the mushrooms was not evaluated but the Japanese are known to be avid consumers of mushrooms that contain high amounts of ergo.

More ergo, better health?

One important question that has always begged an answer is how much ergo is consumed in the diet by humans. A 2016 study was conducted that attempted to estimate the average ergo consumption in five different countries. I used their data to calculate the estimated amount of ergo consumed per day by an average 150-pound person and found that it ranged from 1.1 in the U.S. to 4.6 milligrams per day in Italy.

We were then able to compare estimated ergo consumption against mortality rate data from each country caused by the common neurological diseases, including Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis. We found, in each case, a decline in the death rates with increasing estimated ergo consumption. Of course, one cannot assume a cause and effect relationship from such an exercise, but it does support our hypothesis that it may be possible to decrease the incidence of neurological diseases by increasing mushroom consumption.

If you don't eat mushrooms, how do you get your ergo?

Apparently, ergo gets into the food chain other than by mushroom consumption via fungi in the soil. The fungi pass ergo on to plants grown in the soil and then on to animals that consume the plants. So that depends on healthy fungal populations in agricultural soils.

This led us to consider whether ergo levels in the American diet may be harmed by modern agricultural practices that might reduce fungal populations in soils. We began a collaboration with scientists at the Rodale Institute, who are leaders in the study of regenerative organic agricultural methods, to examine this. Preliminary experiments with oats have shown that farming practices that do not require tilling resulted in significantly higher ergo levels in the oats than with conventional practices, where tillage of the soil disrupts fungal populations.

In 1928 Alexander Fleming accidentally discovered penicillin produced from a fungal contaminant in a petri dish. This discovery was pivotal to the start of a revolution in medicine that saved countless lives from bacterial infections. Perhaps fungi will be key to a more subtle, but no less important, revolution through ergo produced by mushrooms. Perhaps then we can fulfill the admonition of Hippocrates to “let food be thy medicine.”

Robert Beelman is a professor of food science at Pennsylvania State University.

Alcohol sales to be allowed

at Lakeview Commons

By Kathryn Reed

Alcohol will be allowed on a regular basis at Lakeview Commons starting in May.

This is a big departure from South Lake Tahoe's rules that have been on the books for years that banned alcohol sales or consumption at city parks except under special occasions, like the Thursday Live at Lakeview events.

A glitch of sorts is what has led to the change in policy.

When the request for proposals for a concessionaire at Lakeview Commons were sent out they said alcohol was allowable. Sierra-at-Tahoe, the winning bidder, budgeted for the sale of beer and wine.

Attorney Sergio Rudin with the law firm of Burke, Williams and Sorensen at the April 17 City Council meeting said there are three general exceptions to the city's alcohol ban, of which it would be possible for Sierra to qualify under at least one.



A South Lake Tahoe employee works to get Lakeview Commons spruced up for the summer season. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The council and staff ultimately allowed the deal to go through, with Rudin acknowledging a code amendment may be needed to make everything legit. He also said the RFP was never reviewed by his office.

Lauren Thomaselli said the original RFP sent out five years ago mentioned alcohol as a possibility, but staff didn't allow it. It's not known why it was left in the document or who was responsible.

This time the winning bidder, though, had those sales as part of their proposal and no one brought it up as an issue until last week when the contract was about to be signed.

"We are not looking to put alcohol on the beach. It's a little footprint outside the building," John Rice, general manager for Sierra, told the council.

He explained how he would have staff on site to ensure people limited their consumption to a cordoned off area.

Rice also said, "If they bought beer from us, we are responsible for that person. We are exposed for our liquor license and liability as well."

Another concern of council was the possibility of Sierra's beer sales negatively impacting the beer garden during Live at Lakeview during the summer. Rice said he and that promoter have an existing relationship, and that they will depend on each other to be successful, as opposed to being competitors.

Sierra hopes to open the food stand in mid-May and run through at least Labor Day.

Scott Justice, who runs the resort's food and beverage operation, plans to bring the same **high quality fare** skiers are used to to the lakefront setting.

A main goal is not to replicate what is already offered in the Harrison Avenue area. Tortas will be a main feature. Vegetarian options will be available. Common staples people expect at a venue like this will be available – like nachos, hot dogs and pizza.

Something different will be Taiwan ice, which Justice described as being between shaved ice and ice cream.

"We also want to do catering there, so guests at Lakeview have a catered meal" Justice said.

He envisions providing a meal with wine or beer, with a view of the lake.

"That's a pretty rare opportunity, especially for someone camping across the street. It will be a value for those folks," Justice told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The goal, he said, is to be nimble and adjust as necessary with offerings as the season progresses.

Rebel farmers create new food label

By Lisa Rathke, AP

THETFORD, Vt. — Was your tomato grown in dirt or water? Organic shoppers might notice additional labels this summer that will give them the answer — and tell them whether their choices align with what a rebellious group of farmers and scientists deem the true spirit of the organic movement.

About 15 farmers and scientists from around the country met in Vermont late last month to create the standards for an additional organic certification program, which they plan to roll out nationally to between 20 to 60 farms as a pilot this summer.

[Read the whole story](#)