Nevada lacks a signature food dish

By Heidi Knapp Rinella, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Louisiana has its Cajun and Creole cuisines, Pennsylvania its iconic Philly cheesesteaks. Nevada?

Yeah, we got nothin’.

It’s not for lack of trying. The state’s population hub of Las Vegas has taken its place among the best restaurant cities in the country, maybe even the world. But, asked to name a local cuisine or signature dish, experts are at a collective loss.

“We never really had a traditional cuisine,” said Carlos Buscaglia, chef partner of Due Forni, who’s been cooking in Las Vegas for more than 20 years.

The reasons seem to be almost as numerous as the types of food in the valley, but much weight is given to the city’s melting-pot nature.

“Las Vegas is a place people moved to,” said Michael Green, an associate professor of history at UNLV.

Buscaglia said he thinks that because the city attracts tourists from all over the world, and because the casino industry – which leaves a huge footprint on everything – tried to cater to the various cultures, nothing ever rose above the rest.

And most of the people who move here tend to take comfort from their roots.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Corn muffins with kernels

By Kathryn Reed

Corn often seems to be the missing ingredient from corn muffins. That’s not the case with the recipe below.

It was such a novelty to taste kernels of corn in the muffins.

Even though corn is not in season year-round, these could be made all the time. I like to parboil corn, let it cool, then take the kernels off the cob. I put the kernels in freezer bags until I want to use them some time during the winter or spring.

Normally, I think of corn muffins to serve with chili in the winter. I had these with a salad. (I froze some of the muffins, so we’ll see if that works.)

I cooked them three different ways. One way was using cupcake liners in a normal size tin. The other was to spray a mini muffin tin with a non-stick spray. The third was to spray an 8 x 8 pan.

The mini muffins were the best. In two bites the morsels were devoured. And they were perfect complements to the salad.

The wrapper on the bigger muffins was greasy on the outside, but the muffins were fine. It was just too much bread for me. But I liked this size muffin for breakfast.

The pan is the traditional way I have had corn bread. This gives the option to cut into various size pieces.

I thought they had so much flavor that I didn’t put anything on them. But butter or honey would be good.



Corn Muffins

1¼ C flour

¾ C cornmeal

1 T baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

1½ C buttermilk

½ C vegetable oil

¼ C honey

6 T butter

¼ C sugar

4 large eggs

1 C fresh corn kernels (2 ears)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line muffin tins with paper liners or coat with cooking spray.

Beat butter and sugar in mixing bowl until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time. Gradually add dry ingredients.

Beat in buttermilk, oil and honey. Mix well.

Add corn, and mix on low speed until blended.

Pour mixture into liners and/or pan. Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden. Insert toothpick in center; if clean, muffins are done.

K’s Kitchen: Fresh peaches with bourbon

By Kathryn Reed

Cooking and cocktails are usually separate things. Not so with this drink.

While it takes more effort than the usual libation, it was well worth it. The final product was delicious.

The only problem was stopping at one. Sue made them on a work night, so we limited our intake.

I’m looking forward to more soon. That is the nice thing about this recipe – the ingredients will last a few days in the fridge.

I would have thought adding sugar to the naturally sweet peaches would have been overkill. Not so. The bourbon and lime juice temper the sweetness.

This is still a sweet drink, but not outrageously so. The real problem is the alcohol is subtle enough that on a warm day I could see it would be too easy to throw a few of these back and not realize what I did until it’s too late.



Shake Your Peaches (makes 8 drinks)

2½ C water

2/3 C sugar

3 peeled peaches, chopped

1¼ C bourbon

1 C fresh lime juice

Combine water, sugar and peaches in saucepan over high heat. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir as needed.

Place pan in bowl of ice water. Once at room temperature, puree in blender. Add bourbon and lime juice. Mix well. Chill until cold.

Serve over ice.

Wood-roasted coffee purveyor expands to Tahoe



Wood-Fire Roasted Coffee in now available in Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

By Lake Tahoe News staff

It all started with roasting coffee beans on a stovetop.

Tim Curry of Reno now operates Wood-Fire Roasted Coffee, an independent craft coffee roasting business, using an old-style Italian wood-fired roaster.

He just expanded into the Lake Tahoe market, with beans available at Overland Meats and Grassroots in South Lake Tahoe, and Village Market in Incline Village.

Lake Tahoe News had two tasters rate four beans.

“Overall, I really liked this coffee and would be happy to buy at least two of the beans. I went with the dark first, my preference, but ended up being delighted by the Ethiopian,” Kim said.

Sue said, “Overall, coffee varieties from the Wood-Fire

Roasted Co. made me feel like I was sitting in front of a campfire with my mug. The flavors were smooth and not burnt like some I've had with mass produced makers, namely Starbucks."

Both tasted the coffees black. Kim then added cream to hers, while Sue added milk and sweetener.

Kim's comments:

- Desperado: Deep and smooth with a nice, roasty finish and no bitterness. I'd buy this.
- Peru: It's not bad. It's a little thinner than Desperado, nutty with a tinny finish that's not altogether unpleasant. It's zippy, but not an experience.
- Ethiopian: Bright and fragrant, has depth, a little spicy. I like dark roasts, but I'd buy this light-to-medium roast for the flavors and aroma and I'd drink it in a silk robe.
- Honduran: Roasty, chocolaty. Mild and delicious. Every day coffee.

Sue's comments:

- Desperado: My favorite. It has a deep, rich, nutty flavor like a good Merlot with a lingering effect. What's rare, the milk even complemented the flavor of the coffee when I compared it to drinking it black. Otherwise, drinking it black was like sucking on a coffee bean.
- Peru: It also has a lasting flavor, with a hint of chocolate and slight of nuttiness, much like the former, only milder.
- Honduras: A mixed a sense of nuttiness with vanilla.
- Ethiopian: It had a strong aroma with a dash of nutmeg in the flavor. What's different with this one is a definite citrus flavor that gave it a spark without

compromising its ease of drinking it.

Drought could alter craft beer business

By Brianna Sacks, Los Angeles Times
When Lagunitas Brewing Co. fills its beer bottles, Northern California's Russian River provides the main ingredient.

Lagunitas has become one of the fastest-growing stars of California's booming craft beer scene. But the Russian River is shrinking after three years of punishing drought.

"We are at the maximum growth threshold here in California because of water," said Leon Sharyon, chief financial officer for Lagunitas, which uses nearly 2 million gallons of river water a year at its Petaluma brewery.

Breweries run through an average of four to seven gallons of water to end up with one gallon of beer. With California in the midst of a water crisis, breweries are scrambling.

If this drought continues for two, three more years, that could greatly impact the production and growth of our breweries. – Tom McCormick, executive director of the California Craft Brewers Association
California is home to more than 400 craft brewers – the most in the country. They sold $4.7 billion worth of beer in 2012, about 17 percent of the state's total beer sales, according to the most recent statistics from the California Craft Brewers Association.
Read the whole story

Brew fest coming to the South Shore

The inaugural Tahoe Craft BeerFest is Aug. 9 at MontBleu in Stateline.

More than 45 brew will be on tap, plus barbecue, live music, games, and competitions. Among the brewers featured will be Stone IPA Brewing, Drakes Brewing and Nikasi Brewing. Lake Tahoe area beer makers include St. James Brasserie, High Sierra Brewing and Great Basin Brewing.

Admission is $25, which includes a tasting glass and unlimited tasting from 1-7pm, plus access to games, competitions, and live music on stage from local favorites Cool Black Kettle and The Connor Band. Tickets are available at the MontBleu Box Office.

K's Kitchen: Baseball inspired cocktail

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes I question whether Sue is really a Giants fan or a Red Sox fan.

Last weekend my doubts became stronger when she came up with the Green Monster on the same day Jake Peavy made his first start as a Giant. Peavy had just been traded from the Red Sox

– land of the Green Monster in left field.

Sue grew up in Vermont, where the Red Sox are the home team for New Englanders.

She’s never come up with a drink that had anything to do with Giants – not even when they were winning World Series.

She made two versions of the drink. The bourbon was for me, the vodka for her. We both liked our respective drinks better. It had everything to do with our preference of liquor. I would probably have liked mine even more if there had been a little less Midori. Sue is the melon liqueur fan.



Green Monster

1 shot Tennessee bourbon or vodka
2 shots ginger ale
1 shot Midori melon liqueur
Lemon slice to garnish

Place liquids in cocktail shaker with ice. Pour into chilled glass. Garnish with floating lemon slice.

Syrup may be the super fuel athletes need

By Berne Broudy, Outside

Beets are so 2013. That's right: maple syrup is the world's newest super fuel, and it will soon be available in tear-top packets like the ones used by Honey Stinger and Gu.

A new company – called UnTapped and backed by pro racer Ted King – plans to package the maple syrup as an energy gel. Each packet, which contains only pure maple syrup from Vermont's Slopeside Syrup – has 100 calories of natural energy. It's available now for pre-order on Indiegogo.

Maple syrup has many of the minerals and electrolytes athletes need to perform at the top of their games. A tablespoon of pure maple syrup has two milligrams of sodium – critical to help maintain blood fluid levels during exercise. That same amount of syrup also has 42 milligrams of potassium to prevent muscle cramping. Manganese – a trace element linked to better bone health – occurs naturally in maple syrup, as does iron.

There's more. According to a 2011 study from researchers at the University of Rhode Island, Canadian maple syrup has anti-inflammatory properties: one of the lead researchers went so far as to call it "a champion food" with many of the same healthy compounds found in berries, tea, red wine, and flax seed.

Read the whole story

Sample the Sierra to include people's choice award

Sample the Sierra attendees for the first time will be able to vote for their favorite booth.

The booth with the most votes will be awarded the Best Tasting Experience of 2014.

The farm-to-fork festival is Aug. 31 at Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe from noon-4pm. The event pairs regional growers and producers with chefs and restaurants and wineries, distilleries and breweries.

Tickets are $30 until July 31, $40 in August. They are available online.

K's Kitchen: A non-sweet rum drink

By Kathryn Reed

Rum is one of Sue's favorite spirits. It has something to do with all those fruity drinks that can be made with it. But I have to be in the mood for a sweet drink.

To compromise, she created the concoction below. I'm a native of Florida, so that's how she came up with the drink.

I would have thought with the ingredients involved it would have been sweet. I was pleasantly surprised it wasn't. It was also a good sipping drink – as in, neither of us wanted to

guzzle it and immediately have another. That can be a problem with sweet drinks, especially on a warm Tahoe summer day.

Sweet vermouth isn’t something we have had in the house before, so I’ll be interested to see what else she uses it for.



Florida Girl

2 ounces white rum

¾ ounce fresh lime juice

½ ounce sweet vermouth

½ ounce sweet crème de cacao

½ tsp grenadine

2 ounces club soda

1 lime wheel for garnish

Mix the ingredients in a cocktail shaker; fill shaker with ice. Strain into a chilled glass. Garnish with lime.