

K's Kitchen: Corn salsa with options

By Kathryn Reed

When I hear salsa I automatically think chips. While that would be an option for this recipe, it really is much more versatile.

It would be a great accompaniment to certain fish, or even pork.

I tossed it with fresh spinach for a salad. It was outstanding. The salsa wilted the spinach ever so slightly.

The red onion adds a bit of sweetness, the lime that tanginess and the peppers the final punch.

Grilling the corn isn't necessary, but it does bring a different flavor than if you boil the corn – or were to use frozen or canned.

This is also one of those recipes that can be made a few days in advance and it will have a shelf life of about a week.



Corn Salsa

6 ears corn

2-plus T olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ C minced red onion

$\frac{1}{2}$ C chopped cilantro

1 tsp grated lime rind

2 T fresh lime juice

1 tsp kosher salt

2 jalapeños, seeded and minced

Lightly oil grill so corn won't stick. Over medium-high grill cook corn until charred on all sides. Remove kernels from cob.

Combine corn with remaining ingredients.

Foodies sample their way through Sierra edibles



Patrick Harrity with Cold Water Brewery preps his dessert plate at Sample the Sierra. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Beer with bread pudding. Chickpeas as a main ingredient in the entrée round of the chefs' challenge. Wine that wouldn't stop flowing.

This and a whole lot more is what Sample the Sierra is all about.

The eighth annual food pairing was a celebration of local restaurants, regional foods and adult libations, interspersed with artisans. Bijou Community Park in South Lake Tahoe was full of people enjoying themselves Sept. 16 – what with the event selling out.

This culinary extravaganza showcases food grown in the region, local chefs cooking with it and El Dorado County adult beverage makers.

“It’s like Costco, but better. There is no pressure to buy,” said Danielle Cvitanich of South Lake Tahoe. “It’s great. We get to try all of these local vendors.”

This was the first year she and her husband, Joel, have been to Sample the Sierra.

They were partial to MoonHouse BrewHouse’s Cuban with its lemon-limey flavors that was paired with a rum sampler.



West Shore Cafe in Homewood on Sept. 16 was serving house made herb crisp crackers topped with roasted eggplant and garlic puree that was provided by Mountain Bounty Produce. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Kari Koutnik of Christmas Valley was also a first-timer to Saturday’s event. She loves to cook and eat good food.

“This is a friendly event that isn’t intimidating,” she said.

Some of the lines at first seemed intimidating, but they moved fairly fast.

Most vendors had an ample serving of food and alcohol.

The Brewery at Tahoe created a watermelon, strawberry arugula salad with ingredients from Mama Earth Farms & Perez Farms that was worth visiting more than once. The Paramount Porter from Stateline Brewery was a fabulous pairing.

Chef Anthony Schiavone's vegetarian rice concoction was being talked about by many patrons.

In the middle of the event was the annual chef's showdown. This year it was structured like the Food Network's "Chopped" show where chefs have to use a mystery box of food to come up with an appetizer, entrée and dessert in a certain amount of time, and with one chef being eliminated after each course.



Sample the Sierra is Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's annual event showcasing local chefs, regional food and area libation creators. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Starting the competition were Stephen Gill of Cherry Bomb Catering, Kristina Forsberg with Hard Rock Lake Tahoe, Anthony Schiavone of Bespoke Private Chef Services, and Patrick

Harrity with Cold Water Brewery.

They were judged on cooking, plating and creativity. They had 30 minutes to create each dish.

In the appetizer round they had to use quail, pop rocks, cashews and sun dried tomatoes. It was Schiavone who was sent home first.

They had a pantry of sorts – though not to the extent of the TV show – to work with. Items ranged from butter to cilantro to corn to eggs to rice vinegar.

The entrée had to consist of pork chops, chickpeas, yellow curry and major grey chutney.

“The chutney is the hardest. I don’t know what to do with it,” Gill told *Lake Tahoe News*.

For Harrity, he was most worried about the chickpeas. He didn’t let that bother him too much, and instead wowed the judges with his smoked pork.

Forsberg wasn’t fazed at all by the ingredients in round two.

“I think they are all really good together. It makes sense,” she told *Lake Tahoe News*. “When I saw the box, I knew what I was going to do.”

It paid off. It was down to Forsberg and Harrity in the final dessert round.

They had to create something out of mascarpone, English peas, almonds and white chocolate.

Debbie Brown, who owns Cold Water Brewery, was a nervous wreck. After all, a chef of hers had won the competition twice before. Harrity, who has been with the South Lake Tahoe establishment since January, was being put to the test. He was also performing in front of family members.

The pressure, while intense, didn't rattle him. His fritter over white chocolate and cranberry mascarpone with a sweet pea caramel put him over the top.

Asked by *LTN* if he would be making this at the restaurant anytime soon, he resoundingly said, "Absolutely not."



A capacity crowd meanders through Bijou Community Park at Sample the Sierra on Sept. 16. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The dessert round was the hardest for Harrity; saying the peas challenged him the most.

While Brown was a vision of nervousness as time went on, she is a staunch proponent of the competition, and said so long before the final decision was made. She encourages all restaurants to participate, saying it helps chefs grow and builds camaraderie among the staff.

For Harrity it meant practicing ahead of time – working on technique, memorizing what to do with ingredients. Ultimately, though, it was his creativity and ingenuity that paid off – peas et al.

Oldest cooking method now the hottest trend

By Julia Kramer

My winter smelled of smoke. Night after night, I caught a whiff of burning logs, of fat dripping onto coals, of sourdough toasting and rib eyes charring and knobby carrots blackening over jumpy flames. This scent welcomed me to North Yarmouth, Maine, where chef Krista Kern Desjarlais bakes crackly Montreal-style bagels in a woodburning oven built into the side of her 544-square-foot cottage, the Purple House.

The aroma hit me when I walked onto the patio of Vicia in St. Louis and (unsurprisingly) into a hipster hangout named Campfire in Carlsbad. It recurred as a motif among four of the most talked about recent openings in Chicago, whether the cuisine was Argentine (El Che Bar), American (Elske), Mexican (Leña Brava), or Mediterranean (Publican Anker). And it—smoke—was visible through the kitchen window at the start of a \$293-per-person tasting menu at Single Thread in Healdsburg, emanating from a pile of local almond wood.

It's funny to call this return to cooking with fire a trend. If it is, it's certainly the oldest trend in the book. And yet there is no arguing that the burning hearth has of late gripped the restaurant world, seeming to bestow the imprimatur of "serious chef" on anyone who embraces it.

Read the whole story

Food-themed road trip in Nevada

Lake Tahoe is featured in a new food-themed road trip itinerary through Northern Nevada developed by TravelNevada and Reno Bites. The food event is Oct. 9-15.

The itinerary focuses on locally owned restaurants in Reno, Fallon, Carson City, Carson Valley, Stateline and Incline Village, along with recreational and touristy activities in those communities.

Go **online** to see the itinerary. Click on the “Featured Itineraries” link and scroll through to the Reno Bites Road Trip itinerary.

People who visit the communities on the itinerary and post pictures of their restaurant meals in those communities with the hashtags #RenoBitesRoadTrip, #DFMI and #TravelNevada will be entered into a drawing.

El Dorado County brewery offers wine-infused beers

By Matt Kawahara, Sacramento Bee

Scott Johnson acknowledges that merging beer and wine in one glass might sound a little weird. He also swears by the result.

Solid Ground Brewing, a new brewery in El Dorado County, combines Johnson’s winemaking background with the beer brewing

experience of his co-founder KC Sare. Along with creating standard lagers and ales, Johnson and Sare are producing some of their beers by using winemaking techniques and by infusing wine into the brew.

Solid Ground, which features a 30-barrel brewhouse, taproom and kitchen, opened this summer in Diamond Springs.

Read the whole story

Last call at Calif. bars will not be extended

By Dennis Romero, LA Weekly

It was a valiant effort that nearly slid by the foes of alcohol, but in the end there wasn't enough time and support to save a proposal to allow cities like Los Angeles to extend bars' last call serving times to 4am.

Legislation that would have given municipalities the flexibility to go later for last call died over the holiday weekend in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Jeff Cretan, communications director for the proposal's author, Sen. Scott Wiener, explained what happened.

The bill's core language was replaced with a proposal to create a task force that would study the idea of extending alcohol service hours, he said via email.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: What to do with oversized zucchini

By Kathryn Reed

It's the time of year when anyone growing zucchini wonders if it's OK just to turn the rest into compost. It's when they start getting bigger on the vine because you just don't want to pick another one.

Now is the time to find those zucchini-growing friends and make the following recipe. The zucchini in stores are never big enough to stuff. Check the farmers' markets, there could be ample sized ones there.

This is something you will want to serve to others because after a while the leftovers will get tiresome. And I don't think this would be a good dish to freeze.

For those who don't want the bread crumbs, consider using cheese or nothing at all as a topper.

I had barbecued corn left over, so that's what I used. I tend to grill a bunch of corn at once and find uses for it beyond eating it straight off the cob.



Stuffed Zucchini

$\frac{1}{2}$ C quinoa

1 ample size zucchini

1 large handful of spinach

4 ears corn

2 medium tomatoes, chopped

1 onion, chopped

3 tsp sage

1 tsp basil

1 tsp oregano

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

Garlic salt

Pepper

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

Cook quinoa according to directions.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Slice zucchini in half length-wise. Scoop out the insides. Chop that up and put in bowl.

Place zucchini halves on cookie sheet or rimmed pan. Line zucchini with spinach.

Take kernels off the corn cob. Place in bowl with zucchini flesh, chopped tomato and chopped onion. Add spices to vegetable mixture. Stir well.

Add cooked quinoa, stir. Adjust seasonings to your liking.

Fill each zucchini half with quinoa-vegetable mix. Sprinkle each half with Panko.

Bake covered for 30 minutes, then another 15 minutes uncovered. Slice into individual serving sizes.

Best foods to stockpile for an emergency

By Vanessa DiMaggio, Food and Wine

Fueling your body during an emergency is very different from your everyday diet. Because you'll probably expend more energy than you normally would, you should eat high-energy, high-protein foods.

And because you'll have a limited supply, the higher-quality foods you eat—and the less of them—the better.

"In a disaster or an emergency you want those calories," says Barry Swanson, a food scientist at Washington State University. "You want some nutrients and some fiber—something

to keep your diet normal.”

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Butternut squash-black bean burrito

By Kathryn Reed

Some form of a burrito or taco is something I seem to eat on a weekly basis. I change up the concoctions based on what I have in the house.

Lately I have been loving the butternut squash and black bean combination. Then I go from there. While it can be a pain to deal with the butternut squash in terms of peeling it, the flavor is so worth it. There really is no substitute.

I used tequila because I've had it in the cupboard forever and decided I wanted to get rid of it. It does add a distinct taste. If you don't have any, use fresh lime juice. Start with a quarter cup and go from there.

The little peppers are nice because you can get more color into a dish than just using a single bell pepper. They also seem to be a little sweeter.

Butternut Squash-Black Bean Burrito

Butternut squash, peeled and cubed

1 small yellow squash, chopped

1 small zucchini, chopped

8 mini bell peppers, chopped

Olive oil

1 bunch cilantro, rough chop

$\frac{1}{2}$ C tequila

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic salt

1 tsp cayenne pepper

1 tsp cumin

1 tsp turmeric

2 15 ounce cans black beans, drained

Tortillas

Cheese, shredded

Salsa

Coat large sauce pan with oil. Add butternut squash. Cook until almost soft enough to eat. Add yellow squash, zucchini and peppers. Cook about 5 minutes. Add tequila, cilantro and other spices. Then add beans. Cook until heated through. Adjust seasonings to your liking.

Heat tortillas. Fill them like a taco or burrito. Cheese and salsa are optional.

Fast-casual movement changing

how U.S. eats

By Tim Carman, Washington Post

Holler & Dash Biscuit House is a small, counter-service chain that has made some big promises to diners: Each location of the biscuit-heavy concept will seek out local ingredients for its food and drink, whether naturally raised birds for a fried chicken sandwich topped with goat cheese and sweet pepper jelly, or locally roasted, single-origin beans for drip coffee.

If Holler & Dash sounds like the latest chef-driven fast-casual concept, you're right. You're also wrong.

The budding chain is a subsidiary of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, the publicly traded company with more than 600 restaurants in 44 states. Cracker Barrel – known for its roadside locations, its retail shops based on old-timey general stores and its firing of Brad's wife – launched its first Holler & Dash last year in Homewood, Ala., and has since opened four more locations, including one in Atlanta. The fast-casual aggressively promotes its two chefs, whose résumés include far more refined – and pricey – restaurants.

Cracker Barrel is simply doing what almost everyone else is: watching the continued popularity of the fast-casual industry and wondering whether it should adopt its practices or just join the growing number of counter-service restaurants dedicated to speed, customization, quality ingredients and bargain prices.

Read the whole story