

# FOODTOPIA<sup>®</sup>

ASHEVILLE

SHARED RECIPES *from the* MOUNTAIN SOUTH





OUTDOOR DINING AT PACK SQUARE

## IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Dining on mussels Parisienne in a shady courtyard on a late afternoon, the aroma of crepes and the sound of a soulful clarinet resonating off the brick buildings.

Strolling along artists' studios on your way to meet friends for a hand-crafted brew in the River Arts District, before watching an old movie shown broad-side on a bed-sheeted truck.

People-watching from your sidewalk table, enjoying the sights and sounds of happy pub-cyclists and witnessing street buskers charm with lively bluegrass music or classical with an electronic twist.

Content after an autumn day of hiking along garnet and gold mountain ridges, stopping for espresso and a dessert of dark sipping chocolate made from bean to bar at a local chocolate factory.

After enjoying live music performed by your favorite nationally acclaimed artist, sipping a craft cocktail on a rooftop bar, watching a slowly setting sun melt into the ancient blue mountains.

*Pull up a chair and join us...*

**FOODTOPIA**<sup>®</sup>  
ASHEVILLE





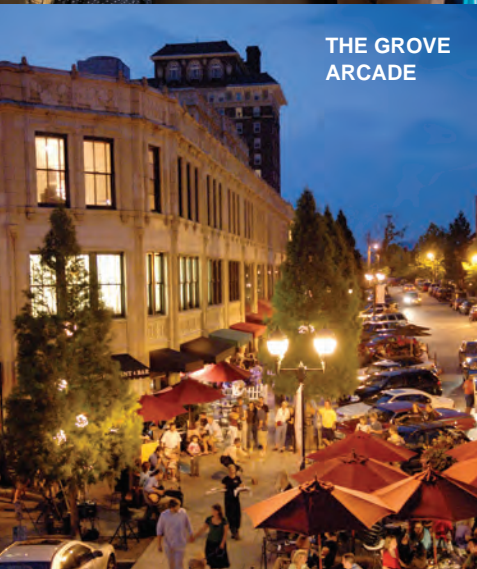
RHUBARB



CITY MARKET



FLATIRON SCULPTURE



THE GROVE ARCADE

## WHAT IS FOODTOPIA?

It's what we call our food scene in Asheville, where a community of culinary collaborators share their creativity, passion and local flavors to craft an experience that will nourish your soul.

Synonymous with the independent spirit of the Mountain South, Foodtopia is where culinary creativity meets the skill and labor of the farmer. It's a culture of tailgate and farmers markets where chefs, farmers, artisan food makers, cheese-makers and bakers know and support one another and where the food and drink in independent restaurants, micro-breweries, and cideries are savored, honored and celebrated. The result is a welcoming community table set for residents and visitors alike.

This little book serves up a taste of Asheville and its Foodtopian Society with a sampling of innovative recipes from Appalachian famers and chefs, and a bit of helpful information about the foods and foodways of the area.

We hope you enjoy this peek at the Mountain South and try these recipes at home. Then bring your appetite (and adventurous food-loving self) to Foodtopia, where you will find sustenance for body, soul, mind and spirit.

EARLY GIRL EATERY



## FOODTOPIA: A CENTURIES OLD CULTURAL CROSSROADS

Asheville has been a cultural crossroads for centuries, in part due to geography. Sitting in a mountain bowl, the city enjoys moderate climate as it is protected by surrounding ridges and peaks and has long been considered the ideal central location for exploring the region.

When early settlers began to search for a place to sell and trade their farm animals, Asheville was the crossroads. Drovers brought livestock through the mountains to Asheville, a crossroads for farm goods on the way to Southern markets. The advent of the railroad connecting the Low Country and ports of the Carolinas with the North Carolina mountains ensured the area was a pivotal place for goods, services and ideas to be exchanged.

In the 1880s, when a young man by the name of Vanderbilt visited the area with his mother, the region had also become known to the wealthy from the Northeast as a health retreat for its pure mountain air and water.

The world suddenly came to Asheville, including its private homes, hotels and market places. Visitors of all ilk, including many who were well-traveled and worldly, brought new food, drink and culinary ideas to the mountain table.

Today, this coming together of foodways from around the world has never been more apparent or more vibrant. The city boasts cuisines from around the globe—from Indian street food to Spanish tapas to vegan offerings to traditional Southern fare. It is also home to several James Beard-nominated chefs who meld their years of gastronomic travel into a food experience that is adventurous and delicious.



TO TANTALIZE  
YOUR TASTE BUDS,  
THE ASHEVILLE  
AREA HAS:

- 250+** independent restaurants
- 20+** microbreweries
- 13+** tailgate and farmers markets
- 8+** hard cider, whiskey, and sake craft distilleries and vineyards

IT ALL ADDS UP TO ONE INCREDIBLE  
CULINARY COMMUNITY

CREPERIE BOUCHON

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This book was created in partnership between the **Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau** (ACVB) and the authors of *Farmer & Chef Asheville*. The term Foodtopia was coined by the ACVB in order to capture and express the distinctive spirit of its vibrant culinary community. *Farmer & Chef Asheville* is a recently published cookbook compilation of more than 200 recipes, insightful stories, essays and photography from area restaurants, farms and artisan producers. *Farmer & Chef Asheville's* vision and concept closely align with Foodtopia, as it is intentionally inclusive of the diverse offerings and cultural insights of the ever expanding Asheville-area food and beverage scene. The majority of the recipes, as well as select photography, in this eBook is excerpted from the book.

# CELEBRATE THE SEASONS AND GATHER TOGETHER AROUND THE TABLE

## SPRING AND SUMMER

Spring in the Blue Ridge Mountains is a slow, delicious greening and blooming of the valleys and coves, migrating higher to mountain ridges as April and May come alive with scent and color. Sweet young spring peas and earthy mushrooms along spring's forest floors precede sun-soaked summer tomatoes, sweet Silver Queen corn and heirloom mountain beans. Elevations in the mountains also afford a lush, cool, green summertime, best spent leisurely dining on outside patios under the starry night sky and moonlit mountain peaks.

### *Spring Pea and Mushroom Salad with Beef Bacon*

**Meredith and Casey McKissick, Foothills Deli & Butchery**

Use the freshest-picked peas available: snow peas, garden green peas, or sugar snaps. You'll have to forage for the morels—and only in early spring, when the ground is warming up and you can see the fern fronds poking up in the woods.

You can substitute oyster or cremini mushrooms in lieu of morels. The cured Beef Bacon is a nice contrast of flavors to the crisp peas and earthy mushrooms.

*Makes 4 to 6 servings*

- 1 pound fresh snow peas, sugar snap peas or shelled garden peas**
- 1/2 pound fresh morels or oyster mushrooms, stems removed and halved**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme**
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots**
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or more to taste**
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream**
- 3 strips Beef Bacon, cooked and crumbled**

Blanch the peas in boiling water until they are bright green, about 1 minute. Drain and place in a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking.

Drain and pat dry; place in a large bowl and add the mushrooms.

Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, thyme, shallots, salt and pepper. Pour over the peas and mushrooms, and toss to combine.

Add the cream and toss gently; taste and season with additional salt and pepper, if desired. Sprinkle the beef bacon pieces over the salad and toss gently.

#### **BEEF BACON**

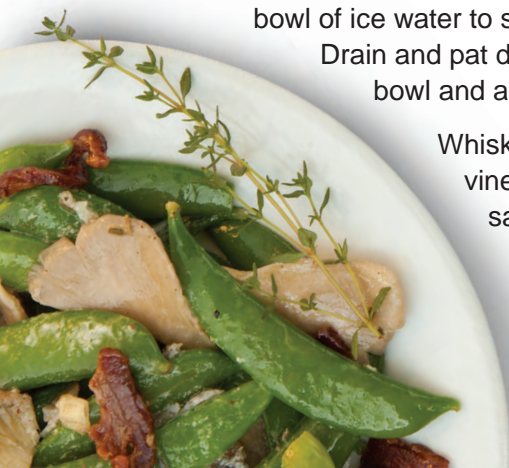
Resist the urge to trim all the fat off of the meat. It will provide flavor and assist in the curing process. You may trim away to create a nice, square slab of meat, which will cure and smoke more evenly.

**Cook's Note:** It's helpful to use a kitchen scale and measure the salt and sugar in grams to get the correct portions of salt and sugar for curing the beef.

*Makes about 1 1/2 pounds*

- 2 1/2 pounds beef plate meat or brisket, untrimmed**
- 1 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**

Rub salt and sugar liberally over the meat. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate one week. Unwrap and rinse the meat; smoke the meat at 180° F for 8 hours. Cool and refrigerate until cold, at least 6 hours or overnight, before slicing.





## Summer Corn Skillet Cakes

**Chef Brian Sonoskus, Tupelo Honey Cafe**

Serve these sweet little corn pancakes with summer fresh tomato Simple Salsa and a dollop of sour cream as a side dish. Or make them smaller and reheat them to serve as appetizers.

*Makes 14 (2½-inch) cakes*

**1 egg**  
**2 tablespoons buttermilk**  
**⅛ teaspoon Cholula Hot Sauce**  
**2 cups corn kernels, cut from roasted corn on the cob**  
**3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**⅛ teaspoon baking soda**  
**⅛ teaspoon salt**  
**⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**Butter or bacon grease**  
**Simple Salsa**

Whisk the egg, buttermilk, and hot sauce in a medium bowl. Add the corn and stir well. Add the flour, baking soda, salt, and pepper, stirring until the ingredients are well mixed.

Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon butter or bacon grease and allow it to melt. Working in batches, drop the batter by rounded tablespoons into the skillet and cook for 2 minutes per side or until the cakes are browned. Add additional butter or grease to the skillet as necessary between the batches. Serve with Simple Salsa.

FROM *TUPELO HONEY CAFE: NEW SOUTHERN FLAVORS*  
FROM *THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS* BY ELIZABETH SIMS AND  
CHEF BRIAN SONOKUS, ANDREWS MCMEEL PUBLISHING 2014,  
USED WITH PERMISSION.



### SIMPLE SALSA

When vine-ripe tomatoes aren't in season, use Roma tomatoes for best flavor.

*Makes 1 cup*

**4 large ripe Roma tomatoes, seeded and chopped**  
**⅓ jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced**  
**2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro**  
**1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice**  
**⅛ teaspoon salt**  
**⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**Fresh cilantro sprigs**

Combine three fourths of the chopped tomatoes, the jalapeño pepper, cilantro, lemon juice, salt and pepper in a bowl. Garnish with the remaining chopped tomatoes and cilantro sprigs. Keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

## FALL AND WINTER

Boasting the highest peaks in the eastern U.S., autumn arrives along the Southern Appalachians with a parade of crimson, gold, orange and eggplant-colored foliage; ridge tops against bright blue Carolina skies and valleys quilted in patchworks of vibrant color, the larders overflowing with the harvest of abundance. Winter is a time of silhouetted trees and rock formations, still and quiet, the perfect time for a hike or stroll before settling down before the fireplace with a satisfying supper.

### *Spinach and Split Pea Soup*

**Chef Cathy Cleary, West End Bakery**

“This is a really easy soup to make,” says chef/owner Cathy Cleary. “It takes a little time for the peas to cook, but the active time is only about 10 minutes! We make it at the bakery when we are really busy cooking other things because it is satisfying and delicious. But we can also get tons of other stuff done while it cooks.”

*Makes 8 servings*

**7 cups water**  
**1 pound (2 cups) dried green split peas, rinsed**  
**1 tablespoon oil**  
**1 onion, finely diced**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary or sage**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano**  
**2 teaspoons sea salt**  
**1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**  
**10 ounces fresh spinach leaves, chopped**

Place the water and peas in a large, heavy saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil; reduce the heat and simmer until the peas are very tender, about 45 to 60 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat a large, heavy skillet over low heat; add the onion and garlic; cook until tender, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes. Add the herbs, salt and pepper; sauté 2 minutes. Add to the soup, stirring well. Add the spinach; cook, stirring frequently, until the spinach is wilted, 4 to 5 minutes.







## *Apple Stack Cake*

**Chef John Stehling, Early Girl**

An abundance of apples in Appalachia has long made apple stack cake a popular mountain dessert; it was traditionally prepared for celebrations such as weddings. Once assembled, this many-layered cake resembles a stack of pancakes joined together by sweet apple filling. Let the cake sit a couple of days to allow the flavors to meld.

### **FILLING:**

**4 cups dried apples**  
**1 cup brown sugar**  
**1/2 teaspoon cloves**

### **CAKE:**

**4–5 cups flour (16-20 oz)**  
**1 teaspoon baking soda**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt**  
**2/3 cup shortening (or 5 1/4 oz butter)**  
**1 cup sugar**  
**1 cup molasses (11 oz)**  
**2 eggs, beaten**  
**1 cup buttermilk**

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease, paper and flour three 9-inch round pans.

Cover apples with water and cook until soft. Mash with potato masher, then add brown sugar and cloves.

Cream together the shortening, sugar and molasses. Sift the flour, salt and baking soda together. Mix the beaten eggs and buttermilk together.

Add the dry and wet ingredients, alternating in small amounts, to the creamed mixture. You may need to add more flour (up to 1 cup) at this point so that the mixture will not flow. Divide mixture into 9-inch round pans, leveling off dough in each pan.

Bake at 350° F for about 20 minutes (or until they test done). The cakes will rise very little.

Cool in the pans about 10 minutes, then turn onto wire racks until cooled completely. Cut each layer horizontally so you have 6 layers. Spread approximately 1/2 cup filling between each layer.

This cake is best when allowed to sit 24–48 hours at room temperature after assembly. Dust with confectioner's sugar when ready to serve.

# MOUNTAIN GATHERINGS AND CELEBRATIONS

Mountain people are proud of the independence and self-sufficiency they live and love. But they also appreciate the connection of neighbors, friends and family, especially around the table. Sharing, after all, is at the heart of traditional community quilt-making, canning and pickling parties and barn-raising. Put together a potluck or picnic, mark a special day or event, and plan for a crowd.



## *Natural Pickles*

**Chef Steven Goff, King James Public House**

**Chef Steven Goff shares this method for lactic acid fermentation; by using a pickling liquid with a high concentration of salt. Harmful bacteria is prevented from multiplying while the lactic acid dominates and prevents other cultures from thriving. You get a wonderful tang from these pickles.**

**Cook's Note:** Also try pickling kohlrabi and carrot sticks, onion wedges, beet wedges, seeded peppers, garlic and radishes.

*Makes 6 pints*

**2 cups plus 2 tablespoons filtered water**  
**3½ teaspoons coarse salt**  
**1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns**  
**1 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper**  
**8 sprigs thyme**  
**6 cloves garlic, crushed**  
**2 bay leaves**  
**Small pickling cucumbers**

Combine the water, salt, pepper, crushed red pepper, thyme, garlic and bay leaves in a saucepan; bring to a boil, stirring until the salt is dissolved. Cover, remove from the heat, and let cool completely.

Pack the vegetables tightly into the jars. Pour the cooled water mixture over the vegetables, taking care to submerge them in the liquid and leaving 1-inch headspace from the jar rim. Cover tightly and shake to mix the brine and vegetables; make sure the ingredients are submerged.

Let the pickles stand in a cool, dark place for 1 to 2 weeks or until they have reached your desired taste.

# *Kale Salad with Manchego, Pumpkin Seeds and Currants*

**Chef Peter Pollay, Posana Cafe**

Martha and Peter Pollay's philosophy of eating and cooking is the same at home as in the restaurant: "We eat foods that are as close to their natural state as possible, and we buy greens by the case."

*Makes 4 servings*

**1 bunch kale, stemmed and cut into thin julienne strips**

**2 lemons**

**½ cup (4 ounces) extra-virgin olive oil, divided**

**1 cup (4 ounces) freshly grated Manchego cheese**

**¼ cup (2 ounces) toasted pumpkin seeds**

**¼ cup (2 ounces) currants**

**¼ to ½ teaspoon salt, or to taste**

**¼ to ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste**

Place the kale in a large bowl. Cut the lemons in half and remove the seeds; squeeze the juice over the kale. Drizzle ¼ cup of the olive oil over the kale; using clean hands, massage the kale well with the dressing to "wilt" it. Add the cheese, pumpkin seeds and currants; toss well. Season with the salt and pepper.

Divide the salad among 4 serving plates; drizzle each with a tablespoon of the remaining olive oil; garnish with additional pumpkin seeds, if desired.



# Fried Chicken

**Chef Mike Moore,  
Seven Sows Bourbon & Larder**

This may be the best fried chicken you've ever had. The 48-hour marinade tenderizes and slightly cooks the chicken prior to deep-frying.

## FOR THE BUTTERMILK MARINADE:

3 cups fresh-churned buttermilk  
1 cup Texas Pete hot sauce  
Handful of fresh thyme sprigs  
4 cloves garlic, smashed  
3 pounds bone-in chicken pieces

## FOR THE CHICKEN BREADING:

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons paprika  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1 teaspoon ground thyme  
2 tablespoons salt  
2 teaspoons pepper

## TO COOK AND EAT:

### Peanut oil for deep-frying

To prepare the buttermilk marinade, combine ½ cup water with the buttermilk, hot sauce, thyme, and garlic in a large, nonreactive bowl. Add the chicken, turning to coat and submerging in the buttermilk mixture. Cover and refrigerate 48 hours.

To prepare the chicken breading, combine the flour and spices in a large bowl, whisk to blend. Heat the oil in a large heavy saucepan or fryer to 350° F.



Lift the chicken pieces out of the buttermilk mixture, allowing it to drip back into the bowl for 4 to 5 seconds. Add the chicken to the breading and use your hands to coat the pieces well.

Cook the chicken—in batches so as not to crowd them while they cook—until they are browned and crispy, 4 to 5 minutes or until an instant-read meat thermometer registers 165° F at thickest part of meat. Transfer the pieces to a rack placed over a baking sheet to rest for at least 2 minutes before serving.



WICKED WEED BREWING



BLIND PIG SUPPER CLUB AT HICKORY NUT GAP FARM

## *Coronation Chicken Salad*

**Chef Mark Demarco, Cedric's Tavern on Biltmore Estate**

With its mango chutney, dried cherries and cilantro, this attractive salad makes a colorful presentation. It can be prepared and refrigerated for up to 3 days, making it a perfect dish for get-togethers. Chef Mark Demarco recommends dark meat for the salad.

*Makes 6 to 8 servings*

**1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**  
**1 medium-size yellow onion, diced**  
**1 tablespoon curry powder**  
**1/2 cup mayonnaise**  
**1/2 cup plain yogurt**  
**2 tablespoons mango chutney**  
**2 quarter-size pieces peeled ginger, minced**  
**1/2 teaspoon kosher salt**  
**1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**  
**4 cups roughly chopped cooked chicken**  
**1/2 cup dried cherries**  
**1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted**  
**1 bunch cilantro leaves, chopped**

Heat a large skillet over medium heat; add the olive oil and heat until hot but not smoking. Add the onion and sauté until tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in the curry powder; remove from the heat and scrape into a large bowl.

Add the mayonnaise, yogurt, ginger, salt and pepper to the bowl; stir well. Fold in the chicken, cherries, pecans and cilantro. Cover and refrigerate up to 3 days.

## SMALL BITES AND SNACKS FOR ANY OCCASION

Asheville inspires informal gatherings all over town. Plan on meeting for breakfast before heading out for a day filled with all the magnificent Biltmore House and Estate has to offer. Grab a small bite and a craft beer before your concert, brewery tour or LaZoom comedy bus tour. Treat yourself and your friends to late afternoon tea or a glass of wine and watch the sun go down behind the mountain tops after a relaxing spa experience at The Omni Grove Park Inn.

### *Asiago Truffle Popcorn*

**Chef Anthony Cerrato, Social Lounge**

Chef Anthony Cerrato opened the wall between his restaurant Strada and an adjacent bar space, forming the Social Lounge. This is one of the popular snacks served on the breezy rooftop—a lovely spot to enjoy tapas and cocktails, with a birds' eye view of Asheville's nightlife.

*Makes 3 servings*

- 1 (3-ounce) bag of microwave popcorn or 1/4 cup of popcorn kernels, popped in a saucepan with 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 1 teaspoon truffle oil**
- 2 ounces Asiago cheese, grated**
- 1 scallion, finely chopped**

In a bowl, drizzle the truffle oil over the hot, freshly-popped popcorn in a large bowl; toss gently to mix. Add the cheese and green onion, and toss again.





THE ADMIRAL

## *Candied Marcona Almonds*

**Chef Jake Schmidt,  
Edison Craft Ales + Kitchen**

Popular in Mediterranean countries and gaining recognition in the U.S., the prized Marcona almonds are sweeter and softer in contrast to the classic California almond.

The flavor is reminiscent of almond essence that is used in baked goods.

*Makes 1 pound*

**1 pound raw Marcona almonds**  
**1 tablespoon light brown sugar**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper**  
**1 tablespoon water**

Preheat the oven to 250° F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Stir the brown sugar, salt and cayenne pepper together in a large bowl; add the almonds.

Sprinkle with the water and toss until the almonds are evenly coated. Place the nuts on the lined baking sheet and spread them in a single layer.

Roast the almonds until the sugar has caramelized and turned a rich brown, stirring every 10 minutes. Let them cool. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 week.

## *Fennel Chips*

**Chef Brian Canipelli,  
Chef/Owner of Cucina 24**

These caramelized, crispy chips of sliced fennel would be delicious as a snack with cocktails, too.

*Makes about 1 cup*

**1 small fennel bulb, stalks removed**  
**About 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar**

Place the oven rack in the center of the oven. Preheat the oven to 225° F. Line a baking sheet with a Silpat or a piece of parchment paper.

Cut the fennel bulb vertically into paper-thin slices, core attached, using a mandoline. Toss with confectioner's sugar. Lift them out, shaking off the excess sugar; arrange the slices in a single layer on the baking sheet, spacing them 1 inch apart.

Bake until the slices are dry and crisp, about 1 hour.



## THE SWEET STUFF

Asheville has a fabulous sweet side—signature bakeries and dessert shops, unique made-from-scratch ice cream purveyors and chocolate, chocolate everywhere! Choose frozen custard and yogurts, inventive sweet or savory doughnuts, whole cream or goats milk ice creams, European-style and gluten-free pastries, and sippable truffles or hand-crafted confections.

In Foodtopia we're sweet on sweets.

### *Buttermilk Chocolate Cake*

**Chef Brian Ross, Dough Asheville**

**Chef/owner Brian Ross bakes an incredibly moist and tender chocolate cake. Here is his well-honed ratio of ingredients that go into the layer cakes you can order from Dough, or take one of their many cooking classes and learn to make everything from eclairs to crepes to scones.**

*Makes 2 cake layers*

**2 large eggs**  
**2 cups sugar**  
**¾ cup oil, such as canola**  
**1 ⅔ cups cake flour**  
**1 cup unsweetened cocoa**  
**1½ teaspoons baking soda**  
**½ teaspoon salt**  
**1 cup whole buttermilk**  
**½ cup sour cream**

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Butter and flour 2 (8-inch) cake pans. Combine the eggs, sugar and oil in a large mixing bowl. Beat the mixture at low speed of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, until the mixture is lightened, about 10 minutes.

Sift the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt together into a bowl. Whisk together the buttermilk and sour cream. Add the flour mixture in three additions alternately with the buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients; beat the mixture at low speed after each addition, just until blended. Scrape the bowl as needed. Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pans, dividing evenly.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cakes comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let the cakes cool in the pans for 10 minutes on wire racks. Loosen the edges of the cakes with a knife; invert onto the racks and let the layers cool completely. Frost as desired.





## Aztec-Inspired Hot Chocolate

Jael and Dan Rattigan, French Broad Chocolate Lounge

Chocolate maven Jael Rattigan says, “Choose ingredients with the same care and attention you would use to pick a babysitter for your kid. Dessert is serious business!”

Makes 6 cups

- 1 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 1/2 arbol chilies, ground in a blender or spice grinder
- 1 vanilla bean, split
- 1 cup dried rose petals
- 1 1/2 teaspoons anise seeds
- 8 ounces (65 to 75% cacao) dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 5 cups whole milk

Bring the cream just to a boil in a heavy, medium saucepan. Remove from the heat and stir in the chilies, vanilla bean, rose petals and anise seeds. Cover and steep 15 minutes. Strain through a sieve into a bowl, pressing on solids to extract 1 cup infused cream.

Place the chocolate, almonds and cinnamon in a food processor; process until the mixture is finely ground. With the processor running, pour the hot cream through the feed tube and process until smooth and blended.

Scrape the ganache into the saucepan; whisk in the milk. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly; remove from the heat and serve.

### No Wonkas Here! A Real Life Chocolate Factory

You don't have to have a golden ticket to experience a chocolate factory. We have one in downtown Asheville, the French Broad Chocolate Lounge, Factory and Tasting Room. The founders, Dan and Jael Rattigan, import beans from their cacao co-op in Costa Rica, roast them, add local ingredients and turn them into exquisite chocolate.

A tasting room offers a prolific number of chocolate variations and their lounge is a sweet spot to enjoy the company of friends and family over chocolate in just about any form—from salted caramel drinking chocolate and mint chocolate chunk brownies to a vast selection of truffles and artisan chocolate bars. Visit the chocolate bar library and choose from 150 different craft chocolate bars.



# Rosemary Lemonade with Sage Honey

**Chef Laurey Masterton, Laurey's**

This refreshing lemonade recipe is excerpted from beekeeping chef Laurey Masterton's book *The Fresh Honey Cookbook*. In her words, "This recipe started with my friend Chris, who shared many of her favorite recipes from her travels in Mexico. This is one of my favorites, though her version was made with sugar. The honey here adds a layer of complexity that makes the flavor so much more interesting. We now serve her not-too-sweet rosemary lemonade in my cafe on a regular basis, varying the type of honey according to availability."

*Makes about 11 cups*

**1/2 cup honey, preferably sage honey**  
**4 fresh rosemary sprigs**  
**12 lemons, or enough to make about 2 cups juice**  
**Additional rosemary sprigs for garnish**

To make a simple syrup, combine the honey and 1/2 cup water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat.

Remove from the heat and add 4 of the rosemary sprigs; let them steep in the syrup until it has cooled to room temperature. Remove the rosemary and discard.

Squeeze the lemons and combine with the rosemary honey syrup in a large pitcher or container; stir in 8 cups water. Pour into ice-filled glasses and garnish with rosemary sprigs.

# Carrot Cake Sandwich Cookies

**Baker Avi Sommerville, Highcliffe Baked Goods, LLC**  
**— Home of the world's best carrot cake**

These cookies from baker/owner Avi Sommerville have the flavors of her famous carrot cake in a cookie with slightly chewy texture. When they are filled with honey-sweetened cream cheese, they taste even more like carrot cake.

*Makes 12 sandwich cookies*

**1 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**  
**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**  
**1/2 teaspoon baking soda**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt**  
**1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened**  
**1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar**  
**1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar**  
**1 large egg**  
**1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**1 cup coarsely grated carrots**  
**1 cup finely chopped walnuts**  
**1/2 cup raisins**  
**3/4 cup honey**  
**6 ounces cream cheese, softened**

Preheat the oven to 325° F. Line one or two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Combine the flour, cinnamon, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl; whisk to blend. Combine the butter and sugars in a large mixing bowl; beat at medium speed of an electric mixer until the mixture is fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla. Fold in the carrots, walnuts and raisins.

Scoop the dough onto the parchment using a small ice cream scoop. Make 24 mounds, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake until they are a lightly browned but still a little soft in the centers. Let them cool slightly on the parchment; place on wire racks to cool completely. While the cookies cool, beat the cream cheese and honey in a small mixing bowl until it is smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. When the cookies are cool to the touch, spread 1 tablespoon of the cream cheese mixture on the flat sides of 12 cookies; sandwich together with the remaining cookies.

## HONEY IN THE MOUNTAIN SOUTH

The Asheville area prides itself in its commitment to the mountains and lands that surround our city and provide the stunning backdrop of natural beauty that calls to residents and visitors alike. Land conservancy, water quality, environmental advocacy and serious study of the diverse flora and fauna of our region are hallmarks of our community. So it is no surprise that Asheville is the first Bee City USA with a bee research center and a commitment to pollinator protection. As a result, honey is everywhere: farmers markets sell popular local honeys such as sourwood, area spas use honey as part of their treatments, bartenders create craft cocktails featuring honey, and the city even has honey boutiques with tasting bars.

Honey in the Mountain South comes in hundreds of varieties. Try a honey tasting when you're here, and you'll be amazed at the nuances between wildflower and clover, locust and blackberry, sourwood and poplar. One of the community's early culinary pioneers and heroes was Laurey Masterton, who championed farm to table at her downtown restaurant. She was also adamant about honey and wrote a wonderful book, *The Fresh Honey Cookbook*, singing its praises. Here's a recipe from Laurie that we send out with love for her—and to you.



# DIG IN! TRAILS, TAILGATE MARKETS, FORAGING, FARM TOURS AND FOOD TRUCKS

Asheville is visually exquisite, naturally beautiful, musically rich and sinfully delicious. Experience Foodtopia with all the senses. Explore, discover, eat, drink and celebrate!

## OUR MOUNTAINS ARE HOME TO ARTISANAL CHEESES

The mountains of Western North Carolina are home to many artisanal cheese makers and you can discover and experience them by exploring the cheese trail. In addition to the cheese-making operations themselves, look for local cheeses on restaurant menus all over town as well as in grocery stores and shops. In Asheville, we're always saying "cheese."

### *Chicken, Black Bean and Chèvre Enchiladas with Salsa Verde*

**Jennifer Perkins, Looking Glass Creamery**

**Cheese is a key factor in the taste of this recipe. When Looking Glass Creamery Chipotle Chèvre is not available, substitute their plain chèvre and add 1/2 of a chipotle chili in adobo sauce, finely minced.**

*Makes 8 to 10 servings*

**1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped**  
**1/2 medium onion, chopped**  
**2 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 (16-ounce) cans black beans, drained  
with liquid reserved**  
**Meat from 1 rotisserie-cooked chicken,  
shredded**  
**1/2 pound Looking Glass Creamery Plain  
Chèvre, divided**  
**1/2 pound Looking Glass Creamery  
Chipotle Chèvre, divided**  
**About 1 1/2 cups, oil for frying**  
**20 corn tortillas**  
**Salsa verde**  
**Handful of cilantro, chopped (as garnish)**

Sauté the pepper and onion in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat until just tender, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté another 30 seconds. Spoon the vegetables into a blender container; wipe the skillet clean.

Add the black beans to the blender and pulse to chop coarsely, scraping the side of the blender and adding back the reserved black bean liquid as needed. Scrape the black bean mixture into a bowl and stir in the chicken. Gently fold in half of each flavor of chèvre.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Heat 1 inch of oil in the skillet until it is hot but not smoking. Using tongs and working with one at a time, dip the tortillas into the hot oil until soft, about 5 seconds. Drain on paper towels.

Cover the bottom of a 13 x 9-inch baking dish with a thin layer of the salsa verde. Spoon 2 to 3 table-spoons of the chicken mixture into the center of each tortilla; roll up and fit them snugly into the baking dish. Cover with salsa verde and sprinkle the remaining chèvre on top.

Bake until the filling is hot, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer the enchiladas to serving plates and garnish with cilantro.



## CHEESE TIDBITS

**Goat cheese** is so white because goat's milk contains no beta-carotene. Lower in fat than cow's milk cheese or sheep's milk cheese, goat cheese is often delicate and tangy with herbaceous notes.

**Farmhouse cheeses** are made on the farm by the farmer, using only the milk from the farmer's own herd or flock, on the farm where the animals are raised.

**Hoop cheese** is a Southern tradition. Basically a cheddar cheese made only from milk with the whey completely pressed out, hoop cheese contains no cream and salt. It's placed in a round mold called a hoop and is sold in large wheels coated with red wax.



## COME ON DOWN TO THE FARM

Want a hands-on farm experience? The Asheville area offers seasonal opportunities to pick your own berries in the middle of rolling mountain pastures and fields. You can observe apple pressings in the fall and cheese making at the creameries. ASAP (The Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) organizes an annual farm tour where you can see what mountain farmers are growing. Whether it's a multi-generational family practicing sustainable agriculture or a centuries-old berry farm producing delicious jams, butters and jellies, area farms offer both insights into the land as well as inspiration about the bounty of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

### *Collard Greens in Coconut Milk*

Annie Louise Perkinson, Flying Cloud Farm

Farmer Annie Perkinson says, "We make this all the time. I adapted the recipe from the Edible Schoolyard—Alice Waters's school garden project." Serve it with brown basmati rice.

*Makes 4 to 6 servings*

**1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk**  
**1 medium onion, peeled and chopped**  
**6 cloves garlic, minced**  
**2 tablespoons peeled, minced fresh ginger**  
**1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper**  
**2 bunches collard greens, washed, stems removed, and torn**  
**1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste**  
**1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste**

Pour 1/4 cup of the coconut milk in the bottom of a large, heavy skillet; place over medium heat until the coconut milk simmers. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, and crushed red pepper; sauté for 3 minutes. Add the greens and pour in the remaining coconut milk, stirring to coat the greens. Cover and simmer until the greens are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the salt and pepper to taste. Serve with basmati rice, if desired.

### **Buckles, Pandowdies, Cobblers and Fools**

Fruit desserts have always been popular in Appalachia, both for the abundance of fruits as well as because mountain homesteaders know the importance of drying fruit in preparation for what might be an extended winter in the coves and hollers. A fruit cobbler is at its most basic, a variation of a pie with the fruit topped with biscuit dough. But the cobbler has a host of cousins with colorful names.

A **buckle** is a dense old-fashioned cake, named for the way the streusel-style topping "buckles" as the cake batter sinks during baking.

A **Betty**, also called a "Brown Betty," has layers of apples, bread and brown sugar.

A **slump** or "grunt" is a cobbler that's covered and steamed instead of baked.

A **pandowdy** is fruit topped with a yeast dough and sweetened with sorghum.

A **fool** is usually made with tangy fruits mashed, sweetened and chilled before being folded in with whipped cream.

A **crisp** is fruit topped with a mixture of flour, sugar, butter (and sometimes oats, cereal, nuts or coconut) and baked.



## BILTMORE'S FARM TO TABLE LEGACY

When George W. Vanderbilt established Biltmore in 1895, America's largest home was celebrated as a remarkable achievement of architecture and landscape design.

But Vanderbilt was also

passionate about land management and started the first scientific school of forestry on the estate. He brought modern farming practices to Western North Carolina and arguably changed the face of agriculture in the Southern mountains forever. His estate

was also almost as famous for its dairy as for its mansion. Vanderbilt's Jerseys were the source of Biltmore Dairy, delivering milk, butter, cream and ice cream all over the Southeast until the 1970s. Vanderbilt also raised pigs, poultry and game, and his expansive greenhouses supplied the estate with fresh produce. This farm-to-table model continues today with estate-raised beef and lamb, as well as vegetables grown on the property. The Biltmore vineyards were established in the 1980s and grow wine grape varieties for its popular winery, as well as for distribution in many states.



PHOTOGRAPHER: MIKE RISCHITELLI

MOVEABLE FEAST AT BILTMORE

## *Rolled Flank Steak*

### **Hickory Nut Gap Farm**

Since 1916, five generations of family farmers have been providing Asheville with grassfed beef and sustainable agriculture from Hickory Nut Gap Farm. Flattening the steak with a meat mallet serves to tenderize the steak, making it easier to roll and allowing it to cook evenly.

*Makes 6 servings*

- 1 (1.5-pound) flank steak**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste**
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste**
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 ounce (¼ cup) shredded farmer's cheese  
or other mild white cheese**
- ½ cup fine, dry plain breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh watercress or spinach**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh parsley**

Preheat the grill to medium-high heat or preheat the oven to 400° F. Brush the steak with the oil and sprinkle with the salt and pepper, to taste. Let it stand for 20 minutes to take the chill off the meat.

Combine the egg, garlic, cheese, breadcrumbs, onion and watercress in a medium bowl; mix thoroughly. Season lightly with salt and pepper, as desired.

Pound the steak on a work surface with a meat mallet to flatten it evenly to about ½-inch-thick. Place it so that the long side is nearest you. Spread the cheese mixture over the meat, leaving a 1-inch border. Roll the flank steak up and over the cheese mixture like a jellyroll. Tuck in the ends of the steak and tie it in 4 or 5 places with butcher's twine.

Grill the rolled steak, turning as it browns, until it is medium-rare or an instant read thermometer inserted in the center of the inside of the roll reads 125° F, 15 to 20 minutes. Alternatively, you can roast the rolled steak on a rack in a roasting pan until it cooks to your desired doneness, 15 to 20 minutes. Let it stand for 5 to 10 minutes before slicing.

# FOODTOPIA LIVES ON EVERY STREET CORNER – LITERALLY!

The Asheville area is home to 13+ ongoing farmers' tailgate markets active from mid-March through early November, with some markets finding inside locations as homes during winter. Visiting them offers an entertaining and interactive way to get to know our farmers, artisan food purveyors and mountain crafters and you can find one almost any day of the week. There's a list of farmers markets via ASAP—taste your way among an abundance of fresh produce, meats and wood-oven-baked breads and pies. Musicians provide a folk soundtrack as you check out the local poultry, game and cured sausages and hams—there's even a vegan butcher.

Don't miss mountain trout: fresh, cured, smoked and even transformed into jerky.

Canned goods include jams and jellies, mustards and pickles.



## *Chocolate Cayenne Cookies*

**Pastry Chef Aimee Mostwill, Sweetheart Bakery**

Chef Aimee Mostwill's Sweetheart Bakery booth at tailgate markets is always a treat.

Her scones, pies, vegetable and fruit tarts and cookies have the dreamiest flavor combinations. And you can count on them to spotlight what's fresh at the markets.

*Makes 4 to 5 dozen*

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour**
- ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa**
- 2 teaspoons ground red pepper**
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar**
- 1 cup sugar**
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- ½ cup sunflower oil**
- 1 large egg**
- ¼ cup whole milk**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 cups (12 ounces) bittersweet chocolate chips**

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, cocoa, ground red pepper, baking soda and salt together into a medium bowl.

Combine the sugars, butter and oil in a large mixing bowl; beat at high speed of an electric mixer until well blended. Beat in the egg, milk and vanilla at low speed. Add the dry ingredients; mix until combined. Stir in the chocolate chips by hand.

Drop the dough by well-rounded spoonfuls (depending on your preferred cookie size) onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake until the cookies are dry on the top and appear set, about 12 to 15 minutes. If you are baking more than one baking sheet of cookies at a time, rotate and reverse the baking sheets from the upper rack to the lower midway through baking for even browning. Let the cookies cool 1 minute on the baking sheets; lift them with a flat spatula and place on wire racks to cool completely.





CECI'S CULINARY TOUR AT WEDGE BREWING COMPANY

## GET YOUR FEET ON THE STREET FOR FABULOUS FOOD TRUCKS

Asheville has a dynamic food truck community offering everything from kimchi to BBQ to jambalaya. While you'll see food trucks parked all over town, they also often gather at live music events, festivals and beer celebrations, offering up an amazing street smorgasbord.

### *Baba Ghanoush*

**Suzy Phillips, Gypsy Queen Food Truck**

The garlicky eggplant spread that Suzy Phillips makes is simple and outstanding because she knows how to pick out quality eggplant. Look for a firm, unblemished eggplant that does not feel spongy — the fresher the better. Phillips chars the whole eggplant on a charcoal grill and saves some of the peel to add to the mixture. “It adds a beautiful smokiness to the dip — a typical Lebanese flavor,” she says.

*Makes about 2 cups*

**2 (1-pound) eggplants**  
**3 tablespoons tahini**  
**1 to 3 cloves garlic, peeled and finely crushed, to taste**  
**1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**  
**½ teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste**  
**Chopped parsley, olive oil, paprika, pine nuts or pomegranate seeds (as garnish)**

Preheat a grill for medium-high heat. Prick the eggplants with a fork and grill them, turning to char all sides, until charred and tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Alternately, you can preheat the oven to 350° F and roast the eggplants for 45 minutes.

Let the eggplants stand for about 5 minutes; use a thin, sharp knife to help you remove the peel while handling carefully. (They are best peeled while they are still hot.) Save about a quarter of the charred peel and discard the rest.

Place the eggplant in a colander; let stand 15 to 20 minutes to remove some of the liquid. Then place the eggplant in a large bowl and mash with a fork or a pastry blender along the grain of the pulp. Stir in the tahini, lemon juice, salt and 1 or 2 cloves of the garlic; taste and add more garlic and salt, if desired.

Spoon into a shallow bowl; if desired, garnish with parsley, drizzled olive oil, paprika, pine nuts or pomegranate seeds.

# FOOD FORAGING—FROM THE FOREST FLOOR TO OUR MOUNTAIN STREAMS

The mountain forest floor and sloping hillsides are filled with opportunities to forage for mushrooms, pick both wild and cultivated berries and, if you're lucky, dig a few ramps, our wild alternative to onions. Our cold mountain streams are also well known for beautiful rainbow and brook trout, a mountain delicacy many of our local restaurants love to feature on a regular basis.

## *Quick, Easy and Lusty Trout*

**Research and Development Chef Charles Hudson, Sunburst Trout Farms**

Chef Hudson uses locally made Lusty Monk Original Sin Mustard in this recipe.

Lusty Monk makes fresh-ground mustards “full of flavor and fire” including: Original Sin, Burn in Hell Chipotle and Altar Boy Honey Mustard.

*Makes 4 servings*

**4 (6 to 8-ounce) Sunburst Trout fillets**  
**Juice of 1 lemon**  
**1 teaspoon seasoned salt, such as Lawry's**  
**1 teaspoon seafood seasoning,**  
**such as Old Bay**  
**¼ cup Lusty Monk Mustard (or other**  
**spicy mustard)**

Position the oven rack so that the trout cooks 4 to 6 inches from the heat source. Preheat the oven broiler. Line a rimmed baking sheet with nonstick foil or a piece of parchment paper.

Place the trout fillets on the baking sheet; squeeze the lemon over them and sprinkle with the seasonings. Spoon 1 tablespoon of mustard on each of the fillets, and spread gently to the edges.

Broil until the fish barely flakes when you insert a fork in the thickest part and slightly twist it.



# Pickled Ramps

**Chef William Dissen, The Market Place**

William can often be spotted at local tailgate markets, selecting fresh produce that will appear in that evening's offerings at The Market Place.

*Makes 4 cups*

**2 pounds ramps, cleaned and green leaves cut off 1-inch above its red stem**  
**1 tablespoon black peppercorns**  
**1 teaspoon mustard seeds**  
**1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground cumin**  
**1 cup white wine vinegar**  
**1 cup sugar**  
**1 tablespoon kosher salt**  
**2 bay leaves**

Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil; add enough kosher salt to make it taste like the ocean. Add the ramps and cook until crisp-tender, about 30 seconds. Use a slotted spoon to remove the ramps from the water and place them in a large bowl of ice water. When they are cool, remove them from the ice water and drain well on paper towels. Place them in a sterilized quart jar with a tight-fitting lid.

Heat a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the peppercorns, mustard seeds, fennel seeds and cumin and toast until fragrant, moving the saucepan on the heat, about 30 seconds. Add the vinegar, sugar, salt and bay leaves; bring to a boil, stirring constantly until the sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes.

Pour the hot mixture over the ramps, and seal the jar. Let the jar cool to room temperature, then store it in the refrigerator.

## Know Your Mushrooms

The Asheville area boasts one of the most bio-diverse environments in the world, and with over 3,000 mushroom species, it's a forager's paradise. Foraging for edible mushrooms in the mountains of North Carolina can be an edifying as well as delicious experience, but since there are many varieties that have a strikingly similar-looking poisonous sibling, it's best done in the company of a learned mycologist, so consider taking a foraging adventure. Look for the following mushrooms on the forest floors and on Asheville restaurant menus:

**Chanterelles** lend a nutty, delicate flavor to salads, sauces and risottos. Add them late in the cooking process to avoid toughening.

**Morels** add a smoky, nutty and earthy flavor when cooked. The darker the mushroom, the deeper the flavor.

**Oyster mushrooms** can be eaten raw in salads, but cooking them brings out a velvety texture and a delicate flavor that is faintly oyster or seafood-like.

**Shiitake mushrooms** are steak-like and meaty when cooked. They taste fantastic sauteed, broiled or baked.

The **Hen of the Woods** are delicious sliced and used in stir fries. As its name suggests, many people think they taste like chicken.



# CHOOSE YOUR BEVERAGE: CRAFT BEER, MOONSHINE, SAKE, WINE, CIDER OR KOMBUCHA

With 20+ micro-breweries in the area, our corner of the world is a beer lovers' mecca. Asheville has more breweries per capita than any city in the U.S. More than 100+ world-class brews are offered, so it's no wonder that the town has won the title of "Beer City USA" four years in a row. Enjoy a cold one on a Brews Cruise or downtown Pub Cycle. But don't limit yourself to just beer. We've got moonshine makers, sake brewers, vintners, hard cider cideries and kombucha fermenters. Most of these producers have tasting rooms, where you can sample and compare varieties.

## BEER AND FOOD: THE PERFECT MARRIAGE

Asheville is a beer town. A serious beer town. And while we enjoy the outright quaff, we believe beer is the perfect accompaniment to great food and fellowship. That's why you'll see extensive beer lists in our local restaurants and why you'll find gourmet food at many of our local micro-breweries.

### HERE ARE SOME INSIGHTS INTO GREAT PAIRINGS:

- A beer with more hop bitterness pairs best with a heartier, livelier meal.
- Keep sweet with sweet and tart with tart.
- If you're comparing beer with wine, think of ale as red wine and lager as white wine.
- Hoppy beers can be a good pairing for a dish calling for an acidic wine.



AMAZING PUBCYCLE

# White Tire Dip with Pretzel Bites

Chef Leisa Payne, Thirsty Monk

The Thirsty Monk is known and loved for its two Euro-pubs devoted to serving the finest Belgian and Belgium-style beers. This warm cheese dip showcases Fat Tire beer from New Belgium—one of the latest breweries to take root in Asheville. It's a menu favorite at the downtown pub location.

*Makes 2 to 3 servings*

- 1 or 2 packages frozen soft pretzels\***
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded sharp white cheddar cheese**
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream**
- ¼ cup New Belgium Fat Tire® Amber Ale**
- ¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste**
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper, or to taste**

\* Chef Payne recommends using Super Pretzels

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Slightly thaw the pretzels; cut them into bite-size pieces. Place them on a rimmed baking sheet, spacing them 1½ inches apart; mist the pieces with water and sprinkle with the salt. Bake until hot, 4 to 5 minutes.

Toss the cheese and flour, mixing well. Bring the cream and beer to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat; simmer 3 minutes. Add the cheese mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until the cheese is melted. Season to taste with the salt and pepper. Serve in a glass with the pretzel pieces.



## HOPS VS. GRAPES:

As you do with wine, think about body when pairing with food. Below are some handy comparisons.

**LIGHT-BODIED**  
Lagers, pilsners and wheats are like Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio

**MEDIUM-BODIED**  
Ales, IPAs and Bocks are like Merlot, Zinfandel and Syrah

**HEAVY-BODIED**  
Stouts and porters are like Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Oaky Chardonnay.



## THE CIDER HOUSE RULES AGAIN

Western North Carolina is apple country with orchards dotting the mountainsides and valleys, so it makes sense the area would also be a prolific producer of apple cider.

In Asheville, we take it a step further, saluting the applejack of our forefathers and pressing fruit for hard cider as well. The city boasts the first cidery in Western North Carolina and some of our cideries have tasting rooms where you can sample your cider of choice.

### Stop at a Mountain Apple Orchard

Apples are a mainstay of the mountains of North Carolina with some orchards having been in production for hundreds of years. Apple butter and apple cider shine in autumn sunlight at apple stands across the region. There are many apple varieties to choose from so how do you pick the best? It depends on how you plan to consume them—baked, stewed, sauced, braised, or juicy, crunchy fresh? Here are some popular regional varieties and how best to enjoy them.

**Fuji** – Enjoyed as fresh in-hand eating, these apples are also great for applesauce.

**Gala** – Aromatic, small, rich, very juicy apple that's delicious fresh. It also dries well.

**Golden Delicious** – A crisp, juicy apple that is a very popular fresh apple but also makes a richly mellow baked apple. Also good for applesauce and cider.

**Granny Smith** – Crisp and tart, use this apple for pies or cider and in fresh salads since it's less likely to discolor when sliced than other varieties.

**Jonathan** – A delicious pie and cider apple.

**McIntosh** – Aromatic and spicy and delicious as applesauce or cider. A great fresh apple as well.



**Mutsu** – Also known as a Crispin, this apple is crunchier and a little tarter than a Golden Delicious but is also rich and full. Use it fresh in salads, baked or as applesauce.

**Red Delicious** – The most widely planted apple in America, this is a terrific snacking apple.

**Rome** – A crisp, tart cooking and cider apple with a thick skin.

**Winesap** – A very juicy, sweet-and-sour flavor gives this apple the perfect profile for cider making. It's also delicious eaten fresh.

# Hopped Scotchem

Hank Fuseler, Rhubarb

The beverage manager at Rhubarb shared the secret to this drink: a spiced sorghum syrup using Asheville's Noble Cider's semi-dry hard cider. Cheers to Hank Fuseler and John Fleer, chef/owner of Rhubarb, for the creative blend of tastes. With Hochstädter's Slow & Low Rock and Rye—the whiskey—this drink closely mirrors an Old Fashioned cocktail. The blend of straight rye whiskey, citrus, rock candy and horehound flavors became an American saloon staple that survived prohibition and is still bottled today.

## FOR EACH COCKTAIL:

**1½ ounces Hochstädter's Rock and Rye**  
**3 dashes Bittermans Hopped Grapefruit Bitters**  
**3 ounces hot Spiced Sorghum Syrup**  
**Clove-spiced grapefruit peel strip (as garnish)**

Combine the liquor, bitters and sorghum syrup in a mug; float the garnish on the top. Serve warm.

## SPICED SORGHUM SYRUP

Beverage manager Hank Fuseler recommends using “the darker the better” sorghum for this recipe.

*Makes about 2 cups*

**½ cup mustard seeds**  
**2 tablespoons cardamom pods**  
**2 tablespoons coriander seeds**  
**2 tablespoons whole cloves**  
**4 cinnamon sticks, broken**  
**Zest of 3 grapefruits, shaved off with vegetable peeler into strips**  
**4 cups sorghum**  
**2 cups water**  
**4 cups Noble Cider**

Combine the dry spices in a large, heavy saucepan; crush with a pestle until most of them are cracked. Place over medium heat and cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the spices are slightly toasted and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the zest, sorghum and water; bring to a low boil. Reduce heat and simmer until thickened into a sugar syrup consistency, adjusting heat as necessary, 2 to 3 hours.

Strain the syrup through a wire mesh sieve into a bowl. Clean the saucepan. Return the syrup to the saucepan and stir in the cider; cook until hot. If you're using it right away for more than one cocktail, you can keep it warm over low heat. Otherwise, store it in a covered jar in the refrigerator for up to a month.

## Moonshine, Mountains and Fast Cars

If you've ever seen the classic movie *Thunder Road*, starring Robert Mitchum, you might surmise the origins of NASCAR are rooted in the legendary elusiveness of mountain moonshiners trying to outrace “the law.”

Today, we travel the mountains with leisure and recreation in mind, and moonshine is no longer considered the corrosive product of hidden stills. In fact, moonshine—such as that made by Asheville distiller Troy and Sons—is a popular refined spirit with a proud American heritage created with locally grown heirloom corn and the finest German copper stills available. Owner Troy Ball was the first woman to legally distill moonshine. A free tour of the distillery includes a tasting of the award winning white whiskey.





[ExploreAsheville.com/Foodtopia](https://www.exploreasheville.com/foodtopia)