



Foodie

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Slashfood

5 Questions for: Marcela Valladolid

Filed under: [Chefs](#), [Interviews](#)

Courtesy Marcela Valladolid

What food do you eat that would give you a bad rep if other chefs knew about it?

MV: Oreo cookies. I can eat an entire package in one sitting.

Which celebrity would you love to cook for and why?

Roger Waters in exchange for an acoustic, live version of "Wish You Were Here."

What chef would you like to see naked?

Curtis Stone. Oh, and if somebody says me, please send their phone number.

What do you think of vegetarians?

Whatevs. It must stink to not ever feel full.

What's going on in the food world these days that's pissing you off?

Words like umami. I'm Mexican and unless you can explain it to me in Spanish I probably won't get it. And no one in all of Mexico knows what the heck umami is.

Food Network chef and cookbook author Marcela Valladolid prepares a fresh take on Mexican food and shares simple and authentic recipes in her series, [Mexican Made Easy](#).

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Food Adventure Club: Gross or Gourmet?

Filed under: [Trends](#)

Photo: AP

The menu has featured everything from live octopus to pig hearts, goat kidneys and sauteed lamb's brains at meetings of the [Gastronauts](#), a New York City food adventure club that pushes the boundaries between food and foul.

"Nothing's off the table," [Gastronauts](#) co-founder Curtiss Calleo told the [Associated Press](#). "Any restaurant worth its salt has sweetbreads or tongue or pork bellies. There's a food renaissance going on."

Gastronauts was started in New York four years ago, and ever since Calleo and co-organizer Ben Raisher have been dining on extreme cuisine. The group meets at different restaurants on the first Tuesday of each month and its email list has about 300 members.

Nearly 50 people came to the group's March meeting at a Queens Korean restaurant where the adventurous sampled the live octopus and lobster sashimi "freshly vivisected, then displayed on the plate on a bed of lettuce in front of its meaty core," the AP reported.

And the [New York Gastronauts](#) isn't the only group for the gastronomically bold.

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McDonald's Sweet on the \$1 Soda

Filed under: [Fast Food](#)

Photo: [itspaulkelly, Flickr](#)

McDonald's fans may be lovin' it even more this summer if the fast-food chain's plan to sell sodas for \$1 goes through.

Executives from both McDonald's and the Coca-Cola Co. have been trying to get franchises sweet on the deal at recent regional meetings, according to the Wall Street Journal. Hoping to become the place where people flock to buy beverages, McDonald's wants to offer sodas of any size for only \$1.

The low prices will slash soft-drink profits at Golden Arches restaurants, which rely on soda sales as among their biggest moneymakers.

Though McDonald's has tried summer dollar-drink promotions in the past, it's pushing harder for the idea to stick this time around, two franchises told the Journal.

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The Takedown Hits Austin During SXSW - Bacon Style

Filed under: [Events](#)

Photo: [Portal and Friends, Flickr](#)

"My bacon is better than your bacon!" was the mantra heard repeatedly at the [Bacon Takedown](#) held on Sunday, March 14 at music venue Emo's in Austin, Texas.

The event, sponsored by [Hormel](#) and [Le Creuset](#) and organized by Matt Timms, saw 22 contestants go pork belly to pork belly for judges' prizes and/or people's choice awards, winning Le Creuset griddle pans and either a year's supply or six-months' supply of Hormel bacon. Some dishes were intensive, like [Taco Town](#)'s award-winning crack bacon tacos (blueberry-maple glazed bacon wrapped with made-to-order bacon-fat, queso fresco and blueberry habanero salsa).

Of course, food competitions are nothing new and they're growing in popularity. In New York City, much of this is due to Timms, who for six years has held culinary contests in Brooklyn. Capitalizing on the Takedown series' popularity, Timms has taken it on the road. South by Southwest was the second stop (the first was in Boston with the Lamb Takedown).

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Eggs in Drinks - LeNell It All

Filed under: [Drinks](#)

Photo: Aleš Olasz

Many of us have watched Sylvester Stallone as Rocky Balboa down a bunch of raw eggs and wince. Throwing a raw egg in a drink isn't just for boxers building up muscle mass, however. The wonderful egg serves as a valuable ingredient in mixing up many mixed drinks.

Recipes for a caudle go back to at least the 1300s. This warm, spiced drink included wine or ale, and an egg yolk helped thicken it up. Le Viandier de Taillevent (c. 1375) lists a Flemish caudle with water, white wine, egg yolks, salt and optional [verjuice](#).

Possets marked many special occasions as celebratory drinks. One of the more popular party recipes as printed in the New York Gazette (1744) listed 1/2 pound of sugar, a quart of milk, a pint of sack (sherry) wine, 20 eggs and nutmeg.

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The Post-Holiday Hash of YumSugar

Filed under: [On the Blogs](#)

Photo: [Muy Yum, Flickr](#)

Each Thursday, we round up a selection of scrumptious links from our friends over at [YumSugar](#). Here's what they've got cooking this week:

- Has all the green food coloring numbed your mind enough to fail a [St. Patrick's Day food and drink quiz](#)?
- These [bags](#) promise to prevent your favorite carb from turning into stone -- for up to two weeks.
- Translate Irish into Italian with corned beef and cabbage [pizza](#).
- Or, have breakfast for dinner with this [hash recipe](#).
- [Hard-boiled eggs](#) are the new calendars.
- Before the next holiday, brush up on your [matzo](#) knowledge.
- What are your thoughts on [whiskey](#) the day after? We thought so.

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North Carolina - X Marks the Spot

Filed under: [Restaurants](#), [Features](#)

Apple Stack Cake. Photo: [thebittenword.com](#), [Flickr](#)

Self-described "food-centric mountain irregular" Mark Rosenstein moved temporarily to the Great Smoky Mountains at age 19 to work at a restaurant. Thirty-eight years later, he's still there -- and it's easy to understand why.

Long before locavores and sustainable sourcing, the food here relied entirely on farm-fresh or foraged ingredients. Habits originally developed through the poverty-long endemic to the area are now cherished by ingredient-obsessed foodies like Rosenstein.

"It's difficult to farm here, it's so up and down, the weather can change and get extreme, soils are not as fertile." Thanks to the rugged, sometimes difficult terrain, he says, big farms didn't evolve; rather, land workers were cottage industry all-rounders. "At 50 acres or less, people tended to be very independent and the farm was much more diverse - a pig or two, chickens, making their own sorghum. And today, we're sort of in a revival of that," he notes.

Read our "only in North Carolina" list after the jump...

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Tennessee Takes Heat for Proposing Tax on Free Breakfast

Filed under: [Food Politics](#), [News](#)

Photo: [mjb84](#), [Flickr](#)

The lukewarm coffee and stale bagels that mid-priced hotels tout as "continental breakfast" have fueled a tax firestorm in Tennessee.

Tennessee hoteliers have united in opposition to a new proposal to collect tax on the food they purchase for their free breakfasts. The state maintains the proposal is intended to counteract a legal decision that made Tennessee an "anomaly" by creating a sales tax exemption for hotels.

"Tennessee is not seeking to do anything groundbreaking or revolutionary," [Department of Revenue](#) commissioner Reagan Farr says.

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Spicy Chicken Eggplant and Bell Peppers - Feast Your Eyes

Filed under: [Feast Your Eyes](#)

Photo: [qlinart](#), [Flickr](#)

There is something joyful about a stir-fry -- the percussive tap of a wok *chuan* (spatula) sliding vegetables around carbon steel, the hiss and spit as the food cooks, the fragrance of citrus in a [spicy orange-beef-and-broccoli medley](#) or the smell of the sea in a combo of [scallops, cilantro and black bean sauce](#). Blogger qlinart swears this Thai-inspired stir-fry of Asian eggplant, chicken, red peppers, chiles and basil can be prepared in less than a half hour, and that the [recipe](#) is easy enough for a novice cook to make.

Years ago, I was given a copy of Irene Kuo's *The Key to Chinese Cooking*. Her detailed illustrations and step-by-step guides -- plus her amazing recipes -- taught me well. For more on the lure, and lore, of the stir-fry, pick up Grace Young's beautiful *The Breath of a Wok*.

Become a member of the [Slashfood Flickr](#) pool to get a shot of having your photos featured in Feast Your Eyes.

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Kitchen Gadgets that Remove the Guesswork

Filed under: [New Products](#), [Gadgets](#)

Getty Images

Well, America -- the truth came out in Chicago. Judging from the appliances on display at the [International Home and Housewares](#) show running in the Windy City earlier this week, what people really want is what they've been clamoring for since the 1950s -- convenience. No matter how we profess our love for chefs, watch culinary how-to shows, or snap up lushly illustrated cookbooks, apparently most of us still aren't so wild about cooking itself.

In fact, it seems as though grocers and appliance makers have teamed up to create a futuristic "cooking" future where no one really has to think at all. Remember when it seemed crazy that microwaves had a button for popcorn? Well, now they come outfitted with one-touch options for pizzas and omelets.

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New Fast-Food Items Hit Menus Nationwide

Filed under: [Fast Food](#)

Photo: [xtyler, Flickr](#)

If you're looking for something fresh and exciting the next time you stop by a Starbucks or roll through a drive-through, fast-food restaurants are offering a handful of new menu items to help draw in new customers and give old customers a taste of something different.

McDonald's is test-marketing a new "customized" chicken sandwich with a French twist. The McBistro Chicken Sandwich can be either grilled or fried, comes on a whole-grain "bakery style" roll, and then you choose whether you'd like to top it with bacon, white cheddar cheese, tomato and a sauce (chipotle barbecue, honey mustard, buttermilk ranch), the Baltimore Sun reported. Customers pay less for if they forgo the bacon or cheese.

The customized sandwiches are being tried out in Omaha, Albuquerque, and the greater Baltimore area.

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5 Questions for: Spike Mendelsohn

Filed under: [Restaurants](#), [Chefs](#)

Photo: Getty Images

What food do you eat that would give you a bad rep if other chefs knew about it?

SM: Once in a blue moon I'll have a Lunchable, if I find it.

Which celebrity would you love to cook for and why?

Angelina Jolie's son Pax, who is from Vietnam. I lived there and learned the cuisine firsthand. I'd like to cook for the whole family....what a dinner it would be.

What chef would you like to see naked?

Chef Marcela Valladolid.

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Seasonal Spanish Food - Cookbook Spotlight

Filed under: [Books](#), [Cookbook Spotlight](#)

Photo: [Amazon.com](#)

Seasonal Spanish Food

By José Pizarro

Photographs by Emma Lee

Ten Speed Press 2010

[Buy it on Amazon](#)

What makes a standout cookbook, at least for me, is cracking it open and being so tempted by everything that you don't know what to make first. The book never makes it to the coffee table because you can't get it out of the kitchen. In record time, it's spattered and dog-eared. *Seasonal Spanish Food* is just that kind of book.

But it's more than just recipes. I found myself standing in the kitchen, mid stir, reading Pizarro's recipe stories. It's the whole package, the real deal. There's charm and enticement throughout.

See what we tested and whether it's worth buying after the jump.

[Continue reading *Seasonal Spanish Food - Cookbook Spotlight*](#)

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Happy Birthday - What Can I Get You Folks?

Filed under: [Restaurants](#)

Photo: [Rob J. Brooks, Flickr](#)

When I was applying for my first waitress job, my total lack of experience qualified me to work at two types of places: Coney Islands, the Greek diner/chili parlor mash-ups that are ubiquitous in southeast Michigan, and family dining chains clustered around highway exits. I opted for the former, mostly so I wouldn't have to sing.

I haven't visited a [Lone Star Steakhouse](#) since the mid-1990s, but the restaurant's original shtick included a server-led birthday boot scoot that involved way more coordination and tune-carrying than I could possibly muster. Even if I'd been blessed with Ethel Merman's pipes, I'm not sure I'd have been any more gung-ho about breaking out in birthday song: The whole routine seemed designed to shame the staff and mortify the celebrant.

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Salsa, Cupcakes and 20 Bottles of Wine: The New York Times in 60 Seconds

Filed under: [Newspapers](#), [Food Gadgets](#), [In Sixty Seconds](#), [In 60 Seconds](#)

Beware of the cupcake. Photo: [Sifu Renka, Flickr](#)

- Salsa is Mexico's "most misunderstood culinary export." [It's time for a reintroduction.](#)
- You can't cook, but you want a home-cooked meal. Enter the newest [kitchen gadgets](#).
- *Top Chef* judge Tom Colicchio is back in the kitchen at his newest restaurant, [Colicchio & Sons](#). And the food? "Terrifically good."
- The *Times* wine panel tasted 20 bottles of [Loire wines](#). It's a tough job, but someone had to do it.
- In Brooklyn, barbecue meets Southeast Asia at the [Fatty 'Cue](#).
- Where are all the cupcakes? It's actually a [controversial question](#).

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Top o' the Coffee Pot to You

Filed under: [Drink Recipes](#), [Drinks](#), [Method](#), [Coffee](#)

Photo: [Fernando.S, Flickr](#)

Forget the green beer -- everybody knows that Irish coffee is a much better way to wash down the St. Pat's [soda bread](#) and [corned beef](#), right?

At least, as the legend goes, some weary American travelers thought so in 1952, when a bartender in the [Shannon Airport](#) whipped up the concoction to warm them after a hard day of difficult wintertime flight. The drink allegedly made its way back stateside through San Francisco's [Buena Vista Cafe](#), which still touts it as a specialty of the house.

For starters, the coffee's got to be good. Don't bother ordering one at your run-of-the-mill faux-Irish corner pub -- stick to eateries and bars that you know pride themselves on good coffee. Second, if you're going green for the holiday, you may as well specifically ask for an Irish whiskey -- I go for Powers, but Bushmills also fits the bill. (Of course, what happens outside of St. Patrick's Day stays outside of St. Patrick's Day...)

But what makes the perfect Irish coffee? Read on after the jump to find out.

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Coconut Curry Sorbet - Feast Your Eyes

Filed under: [Feast Your Eyes](#)

Photo: [ulterior epicure, Flickr](#)

Tropical flavors play a big part in pastry chef Tiffany Macisaac's repertoire (she's a native of Hawaii), and she shared her [recipe](#) for this coconut curry sorbet with blogger [UlteriorPicture](#) back when she was cooking at Manhattan restaurant Cru. The refreshing coconut-milk and cardamom-inflected sorbet would be as at home in the southern India state of Kerala as it is at Washington, D.C., restaurant [Birch & Barley](#), which Macisaac now owns with her husband, executive chef Kyle Bailey. When she's not whipping up wild sorbets, we hear Macisaac also makes a killer Meyer lemon meringue pie.

Become a member of the [Slashfood Flickr pool](#) to get a shot of having photos featured in [Feast Your Eyes](#).

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White Pizza Wines - Wine of the Week

Filed under: [Reviews](#), [Drinks](#)

Photo: Getty Images

With the spring season around the corner, we're already looking forward to more chilled whites. And as much as a Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel jazzes up pizza, so do some white varietals. In developing this list we looked for white wines with viscosity, complexity and legs - ones that aren't shy and can stand up to tomato-based sauces, rich mozzarella and an abundance of toppings, from spicy sausage to basil leaves.

After the jump, five of our favorites.

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The World's Largest Meatball?

Filed under: [Food News](#)

Rosalie Currier, Sturgis Journal

Take approximately 327 pounds of beef chuck, season it and cook it over a day and a half. The end result? One humongous meatball that should beat the world record set by a restaurant in New Hampshire last November. At least that's what a group of staff and students at Glen Oaks Community College in Michigan are hoping.

On Monday, after cooking for 32 hours, the behemoth was removed from the oven and placed on a scale (by a forklift). It came in at a little over 400 pounds, but that included the rack and wrapping.

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Shelter Staffers Get Healthy Cooking Lessons

Filed under: [Chefs](#), [News](#)

Photo: [Steven Jareb, Flickr](#)

At [George Brown College](#) in Toronto, cooks who work in community kitchens and local schools got a lesson in healthy cooking from trained professionals, the [Toronto Globe and Mail](#) reported.

The program is called Community Health Education through Food -- or CHEF -- and hopefully students will take what they learn back to their organizations to spread the gospel of healthy eating.

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