



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

VOLUME VII, ISSUE III SUMMER 2012 FOOD NEWS FROM TAILORED TASTE PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE

Lunch

Lunch is the overlooked meal of the day – eaten quickly at our desks or not at all. In general, we don't afford lunch the time it deserves and we treat it like a refueling versus a meal to be enjoyed. A quick sandwich inhaled while reading emails or a salad eaten without thought. That's not the case everywhere in the world, but it certainly is here.

For me, that's another reason to love vacation when lunch becomes the big meal of the day. My rationale is that lunch is less expensive than

dinner and the extra calories can be walked off while sightseeing. A light dinner of snacks to accompany a cocktail is generally the way we go when we travel. A crusty baguette and some local cheese and fruit are frequently dinner fare.

At home my lunch is eaten rather late after I get home from cooking. As you might imagine, I'm typically starving and not interested in preparing anything exotic or time-consuming.

One of my go-to super-quick lunches is a

Toaster "Grilled" Pimento Cheese Sandwich. Hearty 7-Grain bread from Yes! Organic Market smeared with pimento cheese and heated in a toaster bag. No butter on the outside, no dirty skillet to clean – just nicely browned bread held together with melted and oozy cheese.

Onto the plate it goes, ready to be cut in half and topped with...[warning: odd food combo ahead]... pickle relish! Yep that's right, sweet pickle relish which must be placed on top of the sandwich NOT inside it. That's how my mother served grilled cheese and that's how my siblings eat it and happily that's how I've witnessed the next two generations enjoy it. We'll discuss Mom's Peanut Butter & Mayo on Toast some other time.

Gotta love a tradition 😊

What's your lunch secret?

Oh Delicious!

That's the name of a drink and most probably your reaction after the first sip as well.



I first sampled this beverage during a frosty visit to New Orleans a few Januarys ago. Kenny, the bartender at the Swizzle Stick Bar in the Loews Hotel, presented our table with a wrought-iron rack holding 4 shot glasses of this drink. Indeed we all exclaimed "delicious" or something equivalent after we took our first sips. As tasty as it was then, it truly works best in the summer.

Think "grown-up" lemonade composed of orange vodka, peach schnapps and limoncello. It's great on the rocks with a sprig of mint or basil.

Last summer while staying at a beach house that was equipped with a Margaritaville machine, we turned the Oh Delicious into a slurpee-like frozen concoction that was the perfect counterpoint to the heat and humidity.

Thanks Kenny for the introduction to the drink and the recipe (see back of this newsletter). By the way, Kenny makes the best Sazerac in the Crescent City.

Toaster Pimento Cheese Sandwich

Here's a quick and easy lunch if you have the pimento cheese on hand. You can purchase pimento cheese but it's actually very easy to make allowing variations to suit your taste.



The little toaster bags make this a no-mess, no-fuss sandwich. You can also make this the traditional way, with buttered bread, cooked in a skillet.

In all my delicious research for this recipe, I discovered that most recipes focus on a few ingredients – cheddar cheese, mayo, pimentos, garlic and cayenne. Some add cream cheese to stretch the recipe and onion & garlic powders for another hit of flavor.

My favorite version (from Cheesetique - a wonderful cheese shop in Alexandria) is Dragon's Breath Cheddar-laced pimento cheese. All the classic flavors plus a kick from the Dragon's Breath.

My Take on Pimento Cheese

8 oz white cheddar, grated*
8 oz sharp cheddar, grated
4 oz pimento strips, with 'liquid'
½ cup mayonnaise
1 garlic clove, minced
½ tablespoon of lemon juice
pinch of cayenne
couple "grinds" of black pepper

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Let rest in the fridge for a while so the flavors meld.

If using a toaster bag, just spread some of the Pimento Cheese on a slice of multi-grain bread. Top with another slice, pop into the bag and then into the toaster until cheese melts and bread is browned to your liking.

**Substitute Dragon's Breath if you can find it and omit the cayenne.*

Dog Shadows

This spot is totally unrelated to food, but I just love the pictures I took when walking my dogs one day. I think they look feral and a bit wild.



Hmm, may be more appropriate for the Halloween edition of Tidbits, but I went with the Dog Days of Summer theme instead ☺.

There are times I really despise walking the dogs (when it's 105 degrees!) but do it out of a sense of duty. The dogs love their walks even if they are abbreviated. And of course, following the walk comes a meal so that's probably the real reason they enjoy them.

But it also gives me about 30 minutes to break away from the computer and just work on auto-pilot. Sometimes I end up thinking about work (or food such as Basil Sorbet) but many times I just enjoy the views along the way – the plants, the renovations in progress around the neighborhood, the kids playing in the Tiny Park, the other dog-walking folks I encounter. It's a forced break in my afternoon and I guess I should thank the pups for that.



Oh Delicious!

1 oz Stolli Orange Vodka
½ oz peach schnapps
½ oz limoncella
½ oz lemon juice
½ oz simple syrup*
garnish - lemon twist

Combine everything (except garnish) in a cocktail shaker. Add a scoop of ice and shake to chill the mixture. Strain into a chilled glass and garnish with the lemon twist or slice. Take a sip and then say "Oh Delicious!"

Note: if you have access to a Margaritaville machine – these are wonderful served as slushies.

** Simple Syrup is composed of equal parts of sugar and water heated in a pot until the sugar dissolves. Cool and use. Or buy in places such as Trader Joe's.*

For other recipes and previous Tailored Taste Tidbits, visit www.tailoredtaste.net

Chef Monica Thomas, CPC
301.699.9597 or 240.299.6463
chefmonica@tailoredtaste.net