



Music offers a soundtrack to cooking

In my headphones, The Marshall Tucker Band croons “Six long months on a dust-covered trail/ They say heaven’s at the end, but so far it’s been hell/ And there’s fire on the mountain, lightnin’ in the air.”

Music, including this song that I’ve long loved, can do so many things for us. It can inspire. It can educate. It can lift us up. Or, sometimes, it can wrap up in a warm embrace of comfort.

Sometimes music can be a salve on our souls. Other times it’s the jolt we need to get moving.

When I cook, I often listen to music. A little P!nk while chopping veggies? Sure! Some Bruce Springsteen while tossing the salad? Yes, please! A little Bob Dylan with baking? OK. The Eagles, Eminem, The Rolling Stones, Mumford & Sons, REM, Sam Smith, Third Eye Blind, Carly Simon, Dr. Dre, David Bowie — my kitchen playlists span decades and genres. Sometimes fast, sometimes mellow, sometimes loud, music energizes me through recipe after recipe.

How about you? What’s on your kitchen playlist?

These rich, decadent brownies call for whipping them up to a mellow but soulful tune, such as Hozier’s “Take Me to Church,” or something by Pretenders, such as “Don’t Lose Faith in Me.”

Why not turn up your favorite tune and make these? First, melt chocolate and butter, and, in the case of this recipe, water in a pan, whisk it with sugar, salt and vanilla, then with eggs one at a time and then stir in a little flour, and you have a dark, rich brownie batter waiting to be baked.

So bake it. Use a square pan lined with foil, and bake it until the top is dry — a crust has formed. Lift out the foil, peel it back and let the brownies cool. Like, really cool. You might even pop them in the fridge to finish up.

See Brownies, Page C2

Eater Maine stops writing about state’s restaurants

BY DARREN FISHELL
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — The website Eater Maine announced Tuesday that it would no longer write stories about Maine’s restaurant scene but would maintain its reference maps of restaurants around the state.

Adam Callaghan, the site’s editor, posted online Tuesday morning that the site “will discontinue the food and restaurant world coverage that’s been our modus operandi since 2012.”

“Come Monday, the site will deliver periodic updates to important maps, but no daily food news,” Callaghan wrote.

The Eater Maine site was part of a national network of websites covering local restaurant scenes, mostly in specific cities and not entire states. Callaghan wrote the Eater Boston and Eater.com sites “will continue on as news resources for northeastern food culture.”

Callaghan said he would be taking on a new post as editor of Eater Seattle.

Since starting the site, he watched the restaurant scene in Maine go through some dramatic changes.

“It’s been a distinct pleasure for me to play a role in Maine’s growing food scene, which changed so drastically from when I was growing up here to when I returned as an adult five years ago,” Callaghan wrote.



SARAH WALKER CARON



Coffee meets chaga



Blue Hill roaster adds fungus, fires up new trend

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — Coffee from Sumatra, wood-fire roasted in Blue Hill, meets chaga, the wonder fungus. On the market for just three months, the Blue Hill blend from Unrest Roasting Co. is turning heads and heating up cups in Greater Bangor.

“It doesn’t taste like mushrooms. It has an earthy flavor to it. An accent on your typical coffee roast. It’s smokey,” said Zeth Lundy, co-owner of Central Street Farmhouse in Bangor, where bags of Unrest’s medium chaga blend is a top seller.

Lundy, who stocks do-it-yourself urban homesteading gear, such as homebrewing and cheesemaking supplies, was attracted to the new, natural hybrid coffee blend created by neophyte roaster Micah Beaulieu.

“I like it from a flavor perspective,” Lundy said. “Then there’s the health component, which gives it an X factor.”

That X factor, combining a natural antioxidant that grows on birch trees in Maine with killer caffeine, gives this new, hand-crafted product an edge.

“You have to go into the woods to find



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Micah Beaulieu (top) owns Unrest Roasting Co. in Blue Hill. He offers four blends of coffee, one of which is blended with chaga.

chaga, and that hits a point that appeals to Mainers,” Lundy said.

Touted as a preventative for ailments that include Lyme disease, cancer, tumors and the flu, chaga brings added benefits and revenue to farmers and herbalists in Maine.

Beaulieu, a carpenter by trade, started roasting his own beans as a hobby. A fan of chaga for years, the idea to combine ground chaga with coffee seemed like a no-brainer.

“There is nothing in the world that has more antioxidants,” Beaulieu, 35, said. “People love coffee, and this is something different.”

Beaulieu has several roasts under the Unrest label, including an Allagash Dark and Mount Desert blonde, but chaga was “the one I really wanted to do.”

It’s different enough to make Brett Settle, owner of Giacomo’s in downtown Bangor, shake up his Coffee By Design lineup to add the newcomer. Last Friday afternoon he was

sold out of the popular, organic brew.

“It’s something local, so I thought I would give it a shot,” Settle said. “It’s selling well. All by word of mouth.”

Two strong trends coming together can give a tiny company a mega boost. The Augusta native is starting slow. The only other place to find his coffee besides these Bangor outfits is the Hampden Farmers Market and online at unrestroasters.com. Interest is starting to pique.

“It’s something that grows in our backyard,” Beaulieu said. “It lends itself quite well paired with coffee.”

Lundy doesn’t lead with chaga’s health properties when he talks up the blend in his shop. He doesn’t have to.

“It’s been out there in the public’s consciousness. The fact that this is wood-fired roasted is intriguing. He makes it by hand. Its very, very, very, small batch,” Lundy said. “Our customers are all about that.”

Raw butternut squash? Really?

I know. What a surprise? It’s good. Think carrots. Orange, shredded in slaws or added to a green salad or shredded or shaved as a standalone salad. Like carrots, you certainly can cook the squash and then eat it at room temperature with other salad-like ingredients, such as raw red pepper or celery or onion and tossed with salad dressing. Of course, eaten raw, more of the squash’s nutrients are intact, but I’ll confess: Growing up, butternut and other winter squashes were strictly cooked food, and I never questioned that.

Over the weekend, though, with one anxious eye on the squash supply motivating me to be more open-minded about how to prepare winter squash, I thought, what the heck, let’s give it a try. After all, how much steamed, roasted, sauteed, stuffed and baked squash, squash soup, latkes, and squash casseroles can I foist off on the household? The squash-a-day plan I had going here was tolerated but not that popular.



SANDY OLIVER
TASTE BUDS



SANDY OLIVER

Shaved Butternut Squash Salad.

Shaved butternut squash before I added the dressing.

Using a vegetable peeler, all I did was shave off squash curls into a bowl and, following Melissa Clark’s advice (in the New York Times), sprinkled it with a little bit of lemon juice, a little bit of olive oil, a shake of salt and some sugar and a little bit of black pepper. In about 20 minutes, it had softened up nicely and could be adorned with add-ins. I chopped up some scallions and added them, as well as raisins, which

plummeted straight to the bottom of the bowl and had to be dug out when I served the salad. I really liked the lemon with the squash, but if a simple vinaigrette salad dressing is what you have, by all means use that — but be sparing at first. You want to soften the squash, not drown it.

We conversed here about the sinking raisins problem and concluded that something smaller and stickier, such as seeds — sesame, sunflower or pumpkin — would work. If you give this a try,

Shaved Butternut Squash Salad

Serves 2-3

½ to 1 pound of butternut squash
½ lemon, juice and zest
2 tablespoons of olive oil
½ teaspoon of sugar
Salt and pepper
2-3 scallions, chopped
Raisins or dried cranberries (optional)
Sunflower or pumpkin seeds (optional)

Peel the butternut squash, and cut it into easy-to-hold chunks.

Shave the squash into a bowl. Sprinkle with lemon juice, zest, oil, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste.

Let sit for 10 to 20 minutes, then sample to see if it has tenderized a little bit — allow more time as needed.

Add in scallions and optional ingredients. Toss and serve.

and there might be four or five of you who might, let me know how it goes for you.

Additionally, I am also going to try shredding squash on my grater with carrots to make a cheerful orange-colored salad, and I am going to mix shredded squash into cabbage for a slaw variation. Meanwhile, I will content myself with a new way of using my squash supply.