

What happens to food waste?

Bangor screening of documentary, discussion planned

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

Where does food go when it's deemed unfit for human consumption? What about the stuff that goes to waste in grocery stores, restaurants, schools and farms?

Landfills and incinerators take care of the job, but more often than not food that's thrown away shouldn't be, according to Ryan Parker, environmen-

tal policy outreach coordinator at the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

"Up to one-third of all food is spoiled or squandered before it is consumed by people," the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports. And according Parker, municipal solid waste budgets are one of the top four costs that most municipalities have to pay.

When paired with reports

from the FAO that there were 805 million hungry people on Earth between 2012 and 2014 and reports from the EPA that wasted food produces methane, a greenhouse gas with 21 times the global warming potential compared with carbon dioxide, preventing food waste has the potential to benefit the economy, the community and the environment.

That's why it has become

an important focus for the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

To promote awareness and encourage sustainability, the group has started hosting screenings in Maine communities featuring the film "Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story," a 74-minute documentary about food waste by Peg Leg Films. The next screening will take place at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 3, at



PEG LEG FILMS

"Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story" director and film subject Grant Baldwin is shocked to find a dumpster the size of a swimming pool filled with discarded hummus in this scene from the film.

COESPACE on Columbia Street in Bangor. It is being co-sponsored by the Bangor Area Food Council.

"We do a lot of work

around the state trying to protect natural resources," Parker said. "We're working with the legislature and

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SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Aglie e Olio.

Simple food is all you need

Waitresses in black shirts and white aprons glided from the kitchen window to the bar to the tables where customers awaited their orders. In the kitchen, a chef in his pristine whites cooked at a near constant pace. Occasionally, flames rose as he fired the dishes that have earned Massimo's Cucina Italiana a place in the hearts of food-loving Mainers for nearly a decade.

Just another night at a popular Bangor restaurant, right? Not exactly.

When Massimo's Cucina Italiana opened at 96 Hammond St. in late 2007, it quickly attracted fans.

"It's not uncommon to see old friends reconnecting over a glass of Chianti, nibbling a thin-crust pizza or splitting an order of homemade fettuccini," one



SARAH WALKER CARON

Bangor Daily News article said about the new restaurant.

Massimo Ranni, the restaurant's namesake, and his wife, Anne Marie, moved to Bangor from New Jersey to open the restaurant. Since then, they have expanded, opening Massimo's Breads, which last year moved to a new Brewer facility at 56 Stevens Road. Soon they'll open the new Massimo's Pizza Bar.

But for Massimo's Cucina Italiana, the din of happy diners digging into bowls of pasta and other authentic Roman dishes has come to an end. The owners decided to close the restaurant and focus their efforts on the new venture just up the way.

On that last night, Feb. 27, the cascading lights still twinkled in the restaurant windows facing the street, and the restaurant was packed with people. It was the last night of this restaurant — a swan song to the epic pasta dishes, rich entrees and well-dressed salads that have fed customers for so long.

Arriving without reserva-

tions, we nabbed seats at the bar after a brief wait. It was my last chance to spin flavorful pasta onto my fork in this cozy restaurant that has been on my should-try list since moving here in 2014.

At the counter, we had a bird's eye view of the kitchen and parts of the dining room. We ordered. Bolognese. Carbonara. A couple of salads. Wine. Baskets of crusty Massimo's bread and bowls of oil for dipping.

In the dark expanse of the restaurant, we could hear the animated conversations and laughter all around us. And as diners finished, paid and went to leave, there were hearty goodbyes. Longtime customers embraced the owners as they left.

"I'll see you next door," I overheard Massimo Ranni say.

Soon, the dark interior of Massimo's Cucina Italiana will transition to become Brahma Grille, a steakhouse to be operated by Brett Settle, who owns Giacomo's at 1 Central St. The new owner has been mum about

details of the new venture.

Meanwhile, Massimo's moves up the road a little to the former site of Massimo's Breads, the space they used until moving to Brewer last year. The pizza bar will serve pizzas, naturally. But according to the Massimo's website, that's not all — some of those favorites from the just-closed restaurants will move with it. "In addition to thin crust pizza, you will be able to enjoy many of your favorite dishes and a great selection of wine & beer," a posting says there.

So maybe that wasn't my last shot after all. But I was still happy to experience the restaurant on its last night.

When preparing for this week's column, I knew I wanted to share my observations from the last night at Massimo's Cucina Italiana. And with it, an Italian recipe I've loved and made with love for years and years.

Like the menu at Massimo's, this is simple food — in fact,

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Chefs are creating crafty beer dinners

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

Beer-battered shrimp and onion rings were once considered exciting. Beer and pizza? A pedestrian combination best relegated to late-night study halls. But all that is changing.

In the golden age of craft beer, increasingly chefs and brewers in beer-forward states like Maine are joining forces to elevate what's on the plate and in the pint. And while no one was looking, food and beer pairings have gone upscale.

"Somewhere in Portland there's a beer dinner happening every other week," said Patrick Chavanelle, a brewer and techni-

cal lead at Allagash Brewing Co.

Next week a beer style Chavanelle introduced at the Portland brewery, saison, is the focus of a multi-course dinner with dishes prepared by chef Pierre Gignac of Ocean at the Cape Arundel Inn & Resort in Kennebunkport.

The Franco-Canadian chef sampled the dry, versatile Belgian beer, originally brewed by farmers in the winter for spring consumption, and used his well-trained palate to create a late-winter menu that does double duty: It showcases the nuances of saisons to augment hearty dishes such as cassoulet with flageolet beans and pork rillettes and highlights sweet endings like apple croustade with maple mousse.



COURTESY OF ALLAGASH BREWING CO.

Chef Pierre Gignac of Ocean at the Cape Arundel Inn & Resort in Kennebunkport cooks with beer for a Saison dinner with Allagash Brewing Co.

Each course is prepared and served with Allagash Brewing Company's saison beers, including a classic Saison, a wild yeast Century Ale, Interlude, and the

barrel-aged Astrid. Allagash staff will be on hand to discuss each course.

It's a good food beer because

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Of baked beans and Blueberry Bang Belly

Last week baked beans filled this spot, and a query went out for a dish named Blueberry Bang Belly. I wasn't too surprised when I heard back about beans, because Mainers can be downright dogmatic about them.

One writer said the column wasn't worth reading because there was no mention of Marafax, but that's because he didn't go past the first paragraph. He said Marafax were always used in the lumber camps, but I had at least one baked bean writer say his grandfather cooked in the camps and "always" used yellow eye. So there you go.

To be truthful, I was surprised at not hearing more about Marafax from readers who sent baked bean recipes. Marafax are a personal favorite of mine, and I grow them. Such a lovely bean. I recall that State of Maine always had them — 20 years ago — along with yellow eyes, Jacobs cattle and soldier, and I was heartbroken when they stopped selling them. I found them once in a store in Machias and stocked up. The Co-op in Belfast has them from time to time, and I suppose there may be bean growers who make them available locally.

Which brings us to Scott Clark, who runs a sporting camp in Kenduskeag. Scott bakes bean hole beans every week, uses yellow eyes and gets them from a local guy, Sherwood MegQuiers in Corinth. (Sherwood can be found on Facebook.) There must be others like MegQuiers in Maine who treasure our bean tradition and grow them to sell to neighbors.

One reader asked for a baked bean recipe with no salt pork in it. I would recommend just leaving the salt pork out of the recipe we gave last week. You can add a shake of Worcestershire or soy sauce and a couple of tablespoons of olive oil or sesame seed oil to make up for the salt pork, if you want.

Dot Mead in Southwest Harbor wrote to say she has been baking beans according to a recipe very like the one we had last week which she found in a 1912 edition of Fannie Farmer's cookbook. She, too, has been adapting her recipe for vegetarians in her life and misses the salt pork. Dot, who prefers Jacobs cattle beans, plans to celebrate her 93rd birthday in April by baking a potful.

The Blueberry Bang Belly recipe query from Deb, whose husband from The County remembered it and hankered for some, brought two quick responses from Internet-savvy readers who turned to Google right away. Now, I love Google as well as the next person, but I always hope to hear from people who have family recipes and memories to go with them.

What the Google search turned up was a couple of references to the Canadian Maritimes and to Cape Breton in particular. That sent me scurrying to my former mother-in-law's recipe collection. Charlotte MacMillan was from Port Hawkesbury on Cape Breton, and I crossed my fingers for a bang belly recipe. Alas, I also

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SANDY OLIVER
TASTE BUDS