

A meatloaf for the masses

Not all meatloaves are made equally. The one that follows is a recipe sent to me by Sharon Frost in Calais, who commented that it was the best thing for family gatherings, which we are likely to have in Maine summers. She also wrote, “My mother made this many times for Legion suppers, etc. Good!”

I’ll say. But if you like your meatloaf dry as a chip and flavorless, well then, pass this by.

It rests entirely on beef (while some high-end meatloaves call for a mixture of beef, veal and pork). The addition of onions, celery, tomato puree and a mix of spices that includes chili, sage and mustard boosts flavor, but none dominate.

Nothing is more comforting, I think, for a meat eater than a meat loaf. It is also a good friend to us in the kitchen because the leftovers can be warmed up in a jiffy on a frying pan, and make such good sandwiches.

Of course, you have to have mashed potatoes with it. Maybe peas.

Sharon’s mom called for five tablespoons of onions. Now, you can measure out five tablespoons of finely chopped onions if you want, but I am a round-up-to-the-nearest-whole-vegetable person, and I’d say five tablespoons is about one small onion or half a medium. Ditto on the celery: A half cup is roughly one rib finely chopped.

You can also let this meatloaf be an inspiration for you: Use your usual basic meatloaf (meat, eggs, bread crumbs) but season it as this one is seasoned. One time, I made this recipe with half moose meat, half beef, and it was grand.

Send queries or answers to Sandy Oliver, 1061 Main Road, Islesboro 04848. Email sandyliver47@gmail.com. For recipes, tell us where they came from, list ingredients, specify number of servings and do not abbreviate measurements. Include name, address and daytime phone number. And make sure to check out Sandy’s blog at tastebuds.bangordailynews.com.

Deluxe Meatloaf

Serves 8

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups breadcrumbs
- 5 tablespoons finely chopped onions
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon finely crumbled sage
- ½ cup tomato puree
- ½ cup celery, finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly in a large bowl. Pack into a loaf pan. Bake for about 90 minutes or until well-done.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Biu Vo makes an order of pad thai at Asian Bistro and Bar in Bangor on Tuesday.

New name, new look

Bangor’s Little Vietnam expands menu, becomes Asian Bistro and Bar

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

Rice noodles, broth, a side of jalapenos, bean sprouts, fresh basil and a lime wedge comprise this restaurant’s version of pho, a Vietnamese staple served primarily for breakfast.

In 2013, Bangor got a taste of the dish when Little Vietnam opened in March. At the time, the restaurant at 687 Hogan Road was owned by four people, including Biu Vo.

Patrons of the restaurant in the Maine Square Mall may have noticed Little Vietnam’s sign has disappeared. Instead, a different sign, which reads “Asian Bistro and Bar,” has taken its place.

Vo is now the solitary owner of the business and its chef.

“I wanted to do this. I said, ‘Can I do it?’ And they said, ‘No, no, no,’” Vo said of the previous owners and his desire to bring different dishes to the restaurant’s offerings. After they bowed out, Vo was left, and he has completely redesigned the space and the menu.

“Now I’m by myself. I changed the name, the menu, everything,” Vo said.

To top it off, he renamed the restaurant to represent the expanded selection he now offers.

“Before it was Little Vietnam restaurant, and you could cook the food from Vietnam only. Now you can cook Vietnam[ese] food, Chinese food, American food — whatever you want, you can cook,” Vo said.

The selection now includes choices from Chi-



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Chef Biu Vo makes pad thai, as well as lo mein, chow mein and pho, at Asian Bistro and Bar.

nese cuisine, such as chicken lo mein and chicken chow mein. Pho is still on the menu, along with other items, such as Bun Thit Nuong — fire-grilled beef, pork or chicken served with vermicelli noodles and mixed with greens, fried shallots, roasted peanuts and traditional sauce — and much more.

Vo, a native of Vietnam, moved to the U.S. 26 years ago. He started off in Massachusetts, then moved to Portland.

“I lived there a couple years and worked there for a company where I cut fish,” Vo said. Vo has no formal training as a chef.

“I learned it myself — everything,” he said. Vo said another reason he wanted to expand the menu and rename the restaurant was to bring in more customers.

“When we were selling the food from Vietnam, it was too slow,” he said. He has seen business pick up slightly since he renamed the restaurant and expanded the menu, but he hopes more patrons will come check out the redesigned space and new options.

Eat well, and treat yourself

Food writer and author Michael Pollan has said that everything he’s learned about health and food can be summed up in just seven words: “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” The often repeated advice forms the crux of several of his

books including “In Defense of Food” and “Food Rules” — and it’s just generally good advice.

Plants — veggies, fruits, legumes and more — have so many vitamins and minerals, which our bodies need to run well. Much like you’d fill your car with good gas and quality oil, you should fill your body with good food. Real food.

Pollan’s advice is something I’ve taken to heart this summer. When I listened to an audiobook of his book “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” over the winter, it really got me thinking about what we eat and how we eat.

Fortunately, it’s a good time of year to recommit to eating well with a diet of mostly plants (and some lean proteins). Farmers markets are overflowing with greens, and other veggies are starting to come into season. And while the brilliant red strawberries have been picked and consumed, we’re narrowing in on raspberries and blueberries. Melons will follow, too. There also is poultry, meat and fish there, and eggs.

We can practically do our entire week’s grocery shopping with a visit or two to the farmers market. It’s rad.

Summertime really does make it easy to fill a plate with mostly veggies. Over the weekend, we chopped up big scallions and plucked fresh peas from their pods for a risotto. Big beets and their greens also dotted a fried rice recipe last week. And a cauliflower roasted to crispy perfection for a recent dinner.

While I am approaching cucumber saturation — we’ve been eating them daily since they came into season a few weeks back — I saw the first peppers appear at the Orono Farmers Market this past weekend. Summer squash also has started to pop up. The beets are mature, and there’s even some broccoli and cauliflower to be had. Oh, the joys of variety.

But though I heartily agree with Pollan’s advice, I also believe that treat foods are OK in moderation. This past Sunday, we celebrated National Ice Cream Day with ice cream cones. And sometimes I’ll whip up cookies or cookie bars to tuck into our homemade lunches. Why not have a little treat?

See, to me, there’s no sense in depriving yourself if you really enjoy something. I’d rather have one really great chocolate chip cookie bar than overeat some-

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Maine group creates farm share meal kits

Subscribers get new harvest, recipe for 2 each week

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

A farm share is a wonderful thing. You receive a bounty of fresh, local vegetables every week, lug the box home, plunk it on the kitchen table — but then what?

Faced with a crop of cilantro, lemon cucumbers, radishes and new potatoes, you rack your brain for a recipe. What if someone took the guesswork out of this equation? Someone has.

In downtown Brunswick, the crafty people at Local Market dreamed up a farm box meal kit this summer. “Think local produce CSA for the commitment averse,” co-owner Sharon Smiley said of her twist on community supported agriculture.

In the market’s kitchen, chef Stephanie Danahy whisks up a yogurt garlic sauce and pours it into a mason jar. She tucks the dressing next to fresh — already cut — chicken from L & P Bisson and Sons Meat Market & Farm in nearby Topsham. A stunning head of organic romaine from Left Field Farm in Bowdoinham is nestled next to new red potatoes from White Oak Farm in Warren.

But that’s far from all.

A pouch of croutons, a container of grated Parmesan cheese, skewers and yellow cukes join the party. Last week’s meal, marinated skewered chicken with grilled romaine, Caesar dressing and red new potatoes could be prepared in a half-hour. Each week subscribers receive a new harvest and new recipe for two.



KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

“Our customers who come in to grab ready-made dinners just want to cook one night,” Smiley

said. The kit comes with a list of instructions and identifies where the ingredients came from. “We

thought that it was important that people know where their food is

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