

SANDY OLIVER

White Chicken Chili.

Oliver

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combined with slow-braised pieces of a whole disjointed chicken.

Because Toby cannot pass up a sale-priced, familysized package of boneless skinless chicken breasts, he periodically comes home with a package of eight to 10 of them. I go through them, chop off the skinny little triangles at the bottom of the breast, open them flat and trim off small loose pieces, plus any that are flat and thin. I freeze the trimmed breast and set aside the little pile of pieces. I either freeze those pieces for later use or immediately turn them into a stir fry — or, in this case, the chicken for white chili.

A big package of breasts usually provides enough chicken for two in a really robust supper or a good-sized supper plus lunch after I add about 2 cups of beans. Since I grow horticultural, or shell, beans, I often use those for this dish. Onion, plenty of garlic and the spices, plus a couple of cups of chicken broth, all set on the stove to simmer, finish it.

Don't feel like you have to have an exact recipe for this. Figure on one breast piece of chicken and a cup of cooked beans per person, and you'll be fine. One large onion for the pot, enough water or broth to barely cover the chicken and beans, and everything else is added to taste. It is better the next

I like to serve this over rice. You can add jalapenos if you like or a garnish of salsa, with or without sour cream. I am happy with just a bunch of cilantro chopped to sprinkle on top. You'll see com.

White Chili

Serves 4

Olive oil 1 large onion

- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced 4 cups of diced chicken breast
- 4 cups (or 2 15-ounce cans) cannellini beans Chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon chili powder, or to taste
- 2 to 3 teaspoons ground cumin, or to taste
- 2 to 3 teaspoons ground coriander or to taste Jalapenos, chopped to taste, optional

Cilantro, chopped, for garnish Salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a soup pot, then add the onions and garlic and cook until softened. Add the diced chicken and cook until it just done.

Add the beans to the pot, and just enough broth to barely cover the chicken and beans. Stir in the seasonings.

Simmer together until the mixture has thickened. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired.

what I mean about its looks: It's a little bit beige and mucky, but what a flavor!

Send queries or answers to Sandy Oliver, 1061 Main Road, Islesboro 04848. Email sandyoliver47@ 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.



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Dill Quick Pickles.

Caron

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Now that they're coming into season, several varieties of cucumbers are available from Maine farmers at farmers markets — I spotted some at the Bangor Farmers' Market last Sunday.

Nothing beats the flavor of produce grown close to home and allowed to ripen naturally.

So, grab some of those Maine-grown cucumbers and whip up a batch of these easy, tasty pickles for your backyard gatherings this weekend. No one needs to know how simple it was to make them.

The secret to these pickles is in how they are prepared. By slicing them into thin, round slices, the warm pickling liquid can penetrate them relatively quickly. Unlike spears, there isn't a lot to them, beyond surface area. These are flavored with dill and have mustard seed, garlic, salt and pepper for a nice, robust flavor.

Of course, the longer you cure these pickles, the more pickle-y they will become at about 45 minutes, they retain some of their cucumber flavor. So while these are designed for eating soon, they get better the longer you leave them.

Eat these pickles alone or, better yet, pile a few on your

Dill Quick Pickles

- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced (about 21/2 to 21/3 cups of slices)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed 2 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard seed 1/3 cup white wine vinegar 1/3 cup water
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Add the cucumber slices, garlic, dill and mustard seed to a bowl or quart-size canning jar.

In a small saucepan, heat the white wine vinegar, water and salt to a boil. Pour over the cucumbers and seal. Shake to combine.

Let the cucumbers sit, shaking occasionally, for at least 45 minutes. Enjoy.

freshly grilled burger or hot dog — toppings on hot dogs turn an ordinary sandwich into something special.

Sarah Walker Caron is the senior features editor for the Bangor Daily News and author of "Grains as Mains: Modern Recipes Using Ancient Grains," available at bookstores everywhere including The Briar Patch and Bull Moose in Bangor, For more delicious recipes, check out Maine Course at mainecourse.bangordaily-

Lobster

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does. Grilled cheese is another hit among kids and those who don't eat seafood. And kids can cook their own hot dogs or s'mores over a nearby fire pit.

Gill is proud of the food, and she should be. She loves her employees and credits them often. But she also admits that her energetic style and constant interactions with guests are part of the Charlotte's experience. A stop at Charlotte's can turn into an adventure that shouldn't be rushed. Many visitors quickly come to understand that.

"They don't leave," Gill said. "Six hours later, and they're still here. Or they come back every single day of their vacation.'

The building that houses Charlotte's is small, and after its transformation it looks like a 1950s-era diner or A&W hot dog stand. That was intentional, Gill said.

'I've always loved the '50s, because I think that's kind of the end of that era of innocence and nuclear families and all of that," she said. "So I started playing the '50s music ... and then I started adding the features.

Ah, the features. In a word, Charlotte's is "busy." Not busy like crowded — though it can be that, too. Busy like, well, nearly Because overwhelming. there's so much to see and do, you might have to come back to more fully appreciate the magic.

Peer in through the ordering window and you might see plastic boats floating on the surface of the lobster

"I put the boats in there so the lobsters can work off angst," Gill said. "I feel they probably have a lot of anger issues with fishing boats, so they can just dive up and take the boats down."

A lobster zipline carries crustaceans — in a bucket, thankfully - from the ordering window to the outside lobster cookers. Musicians are encouraged to stop by and "sing for their supper." (Gill



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK I BDN

Framed through hanging hula hoops, Jess Powers pats her dog, Ivy, who was checking out Grover the goat.

isn't above bartering. A painting of a rooster named Hindenberg, for instance, landed the artist a piece of blueberry pie.)

On July 4, the business will turn into Charlotte Lobster Speedway — a play on the NASCAR track in North Carolina — and lobster races will be held on a track built by Mayhew. Customers can purchase a lobster to enter in the

The winner gains a pardon and will be released back into the ocean. The losers will be

Gill also hopes to start selling lobsters to vegans and others who might object to steaming the tasty critters alive. Those crustaceans will be packaged in small pet boxes with the label "I'm Going Home!" on them.

"If you want to adopt one, we'll tell you where you can release it," Gill said.

Dogs are welcome, and three water bowls are set at various heights next to the restaurant. You can't miss it. Just look for the "Pup Hydration Station" sign.

And if you come at the right time of day, you might even see Grover, the goat, showing off his impressive trampoline skills.

Yes. A goat on a trampo-

Gill credits Mayhew with the execution of her varied and eccentric plans such as the zipline and lobster races.

"Boy Friday over here,



LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Sonya Ables and her grandchildren Silas Ables, 4, and Nola Ables, 3, sit under an umbrella after eating lunch at Charlotte's Legendary Lobster Pound last week.

anything I come up with for an idea, he creates it," Gill said with a laugh. "He gets the craziness."

Gill's vision for Charlotte's is displayed on the marquee out front: "Eat. Play. Love. Turn off your phone.

"I realize we don't always [turn off our phones], but we've become so interconnected in society that we'll have people sitting around, on their phones, with no interpersonal anything," Gill said. "Here, [the message] is so in your face, you don't have a choice. You're forced into the real. And it's good. It's a really good place to be."

Gill also owns a smaller version of Charlotte's, called "The Half Shell," which is on the waterfront in Southwest Harbor. There are no goats or ziplines there, but many of the menu items are the same.

Gill is proud to welcome people to her special little slice of Mount Desert Island. She hopes their experiences continue to resonates with travelers when they return home after visiting Acadia.

"To be able to come someplace and to fill your soul, at least for a few minutes, and take it with you [is a good thing]. And then you take it back with you to wherever you go, and then it spreads out that way," Gill said. "And if you can do that, you really change the world. One little sandwich at a time. With a goat named Grover.



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The Clam Shack in Kennebunk uses a bun to lock in the

Rolls

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urban locations such as New York and Boston, has created a lobster empire based on Maine's edible icon. From the docks of Maine to a processing plant in Saco to the city streets, he doesn't waver from his recipe.

"In a good lobster roll, nothing about it detracts from the lobster itself. Lobster is the most delicious thing in the world. You want to accentuate the lobster and do nothing to cover it up," he said with authority.

When you start with fresh meat, you don't need much else. "You don't want to taste mayonnaise, dill, celery and bread. You should bite into it and taste buttery, salty sweetness that rounds out the bite and doesn't mask the lobster flavor," Conniff said.

Luke's Lobster, which opened its first Maine location in Tenants Harbor last week, starts with fresh, chilled meat. Next comes a thin layer of mayo on a bun with a squeeze of lemon butter on top and a dash of secret seasoning.

"A light hand is critical," Conniff said. "The lobster is always the star. Nothing is pre-mixed. It's a lobster roll not a sandwich that happens to have lobster on it."

Stern, who calls out Five Island Lobster Co. in Georgetown and The Clam Shack as favorites, concurs. beauty of a lobster roll is its simplicity and clarity. One place in the Midwest tried to doll it up with curry powder and an avocado," he recalled with lament. "That was a di-

Some chefs get fancy and lace lobster meat with herbs, aioli, lemon zest, corn and tuck it into popovers, which chef Tim Labonte does at Eve's at the Garden in the Portland Harbor Hotel. In Maine's foodiest city, "the lobster roll is a catalyst for creativity" Labonte said. As long as its lobsterness still resonates, it's a winner.

So, what about the roll?

"Chilled lobster is the best expression of the dish," Conniff said. "For us, it's about delivering that authentic lobster roll that really showcases lobster best. That means getting the best lobster and cooking it right."

"In my opinion, the bun

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The elements of a lobster roll are simple, let the lobster shine. Maine Diner in Wells has a delightful rendition.

of butter spread on both sides and cooked until golden brown," Matthew Ginn, chef at Portland's Evo and Maine's Lobster Chef of the Year, said.

"At the Chebeague Island Inn, we make a potato bun using Maine Yukon Gold potatoes, and the result is a rich but soft bun that's great for the griddle."

A New England split-top roll grilled with butter is what Cal Hancock of Hancock Gourmet Lobster Co. swears The Clam Shack's roll is

more of a bun. But even that's

must have a generous amount Reilly's Bakery in Biddeford makes us a good yeast roll," said Kingston, who gets fresh batches delivered daily. "It's a nod to tradition and compliments how great the meat tastes.

> According to Stern and the 500 lobster rolls sold every weekend day at The Clam Shack, it's over the top.

> One final key to enjoying this ideal summer repast: location, location, location.

> 'Ambiance is very important to enjoying a lobster roll," Stern said. "Looking out at a picnic table overlooking the water — to me, a lobster roll should be eaten out-

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